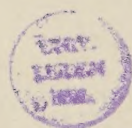


SPIRIT AND LIFE

THE PNEUMATOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
OF
HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

INAUGURAL-DISSERTATION
ZUR ERLANGUNG DER DOKTORWÜRDE
DER KATHOLISCH-THEOLOGISCHEN FAKULTÄT
DER EBERHARD-KARLS-UNIVERSITÄT
ZU TÜBINGEN

VORGELEGT VON
JOHN RANDALL SACHS, SJ
9. FEBRUAR 1984





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9. FEBRUAR 1984

DEKAN: Prof. Dr. Gerfried W. Hunold

GUTACHTER: Prof. Dr. Walter Kasper
Prof. Dr. Peter Hünemann

RIGOROSUM: 10. Juli 1984

*The words that
I have spoken to you are
spirit and life.*

John 6, 63

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

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INTRODUCTION	1
I. The Background of this Study	1
II. The Present Study	11
A. The Goal and Structure of this Study	11
B. What this Study does not Attempt	13
C. The Method of this Study	15
III. The State of the Research	16
IV. Balthasar's Theology in General	20
A. Formative Influences	20
B. A Brief Overview	23
C. Balthasar's "Method"	25
V. Development or deepening?	29
VI. Theology and Spirituality	30
VII. "Theology and Holiness"	32

P A R T O N E

T H E S P I R I T O F C H R I S T :

T H E P E R S O N A N D R O L E O F T H E H O L Y S P I R I T

I N T H E

T R I N I T Y , T H E I N C A R N A T I O N A N D T H E C H U R C H

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPIRIT IN THE TRINITY	41
Introduction	41
I. The Union of the Immanent and Economic Trinity	47
II. The Holy Spirit as the Ever-Greater Love between Father and Son	50
III. The Holy Spirit as the "We" in Person of Father and Son	56
IV. Trinitarian Persons	60
V. Trinitarian Kenosis	72
Summary	80

CHAPTER TWO: JESUS AND THE SPIRIT-- CREATION AND INCARNATION	86
I. The Creation of the World of Finite Freedom	86
Introduction	86
A. Creation as Kenosis	87
B. Finite Freedom	90
C. Infinite Freedom	98
D. The Analogy of Freedom	103
E. Analogous Autonomy	110
F. Freedom: Responsibility of Actualization; Sin and Grace	112
Summary	117
II. The Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ	122
Introduction	122
A. Balthasar's Christology: An Overview	123
B. The Mission of the Son	133
1. The Incarnation	133
a. The Passive Role of the Son as the One Sent	135
b. The Active Role of the Holy Spirit	138
2. The Mission of the Son as God's Kenosis	140
3. The Soteriological Significance of Christ's Obedience	141
4. The Holy Spirit as Shaper of Jesus' Life-in-Mission	144
a. Trinitarian Inversion	146
b. The Freedom of the Mission- Obedience of Jesus	148
c. The Significance of the Trinitarian Inversion	154
5. Summary	159
C. The Faith and Prayer of Jesus	162
1. Jesus' Faith	164
2. Jesus' Prayer	168
D. Jesus' Obedience as Expression of Trinitarian Love	172

E. The Paschal Mystery: The Passion, Death and Resurrection	175
Introduction	175
1. Good Friday	176
2. Holy Saturday	186
3. Easter Sunday	195
a. Easter as the Revelation of the Trinity	196
b. The Forty Days	206
4. The Ascension	208
5. Pentecost	209
Summary	212
CHAPTER THREE: THE CHURCH AND THE SPIRIT	215
Introduction	215
I. Balthasar's Ecclesiology: An Overview	218
A. Recent Ecclesiological Discussion	218
B. Balthasar's Ecclesiology: Who is the Church?	229
1. Church from the Cross	229
a. The Church as the Body of Christ	233
b. The Church as the Bride of Christ	234
c. The Church as the New Eve	236
d. Marital Union-in-Difference: Masculine-Feminine	238
e. The Holy Spirit: Trinitarian Hierarchy	239
2. Structure in the Church: Mary, John, Peter	241
a. The Marian Reality of the Church	243
b. The Petrine and Johannine Dimensions of the Church	248
c. Communion of saints--Church of sinners	252
II. The Spirit in the Church: Objective Repre- sentation and Subjective Realization of the Form of God's Revelation in the Christ Event	256
Introduction	256
A. Objective Form in the Church	257
1. Incarnational Mediation	257

2.	Sacramental Form	260
a.	The Church as Sacrament	261
b.	The Sacraments of the Church	264
c.	The Holy Spirit and the Eucharist	267
d.	Summary	271
3.	Scriptural Form	272
a.	The Spirit, the Church and the Incarnation of the Word	272
b.	Witness and Witnessing Word in the Spirit	276
c.	Canonicity and Inspiration	278
d.	The Freedom of the Spirit: The Living Word	280
4.	Tradition and Office	282
a.	Tradition as Kenosis: God's On-Going Self-Surrender	282
b.	Scripture and Tradition	285
c.	Tradition as Doctrine and Dogma	288
d.	Tradition as Shared Faith	292
e.	The Saints: Living Interpretation	293
5.	The Spirit as Norm	294
a.	The Fullness of Revelation Given in Christ	295
b.	The Living Newness of Revelation in the Spirit	298
c.	Freedom and Continuity	302
d.	Sacrament, Scripture and Tradition as Norms	303
6.	Tradition and Development as Spiritual Renewal	305
B.	Subjective Transformation in the Church	307
1.	Communication: Expression-Impression	307
2.	Faith as Perception of the <i>Offenbarungsgestalt</i>	310
a.	Receptivity	310
b.	Illumination	313
1)	The Inner Light of Faith	313
2)	The Splendor of the Gestalt: Evidence	313
c.	The Objectivity of Faith	315
3.	Faith and Christian "Experience"	319
a.	Experience: A Theological Concept	319
b.	In-formation	321
4.	Faith as Obedience	323
a.	Recognition and Acknowledgment	324
b.	The Faith of Christ	325
5.	Life in Christ	327
a.	Ontological Transformation	327

b.	Expropriation--Appropriation	329
c.	Existence "for others"	330
6.	Life in Christ and Ecclesial Mission	331
a.	Personhood and Mission	332
b.	Missions in the Church:	
c.	Ecclesial Identity	333
c.	Mystical Union and Apostolic Mission	335
d.	Mission: Obedience to the Spirit	337
e.	Ecclesial Obedience	339
7.	The Saints: Objective Form Subjectively Actualized	341
a.	Canonical Existence	342
b.	Theological Existence	344
8.	Summary	346
III.	The Eschatological Character of the Church	348
A.	The Absoluteness of Christianity and the Catholicity of the Church	348
1.	Absolute Fullness	348
2.	Deficient Catholicity	352
3.	One Body--Many Churches?	353
4.	<i>Ecclesia semper reformanda</i>	354
B.	The Church and the Non-Christian Religions	356
1.	Church in and for the World	358
2.	The Spirit of Christ Outside the Church?	360
C.	The Holy Spirit as Fulfiller	362

P A R T T W O

C H R I S T I A N S P I R I T U A L I T Y :

ITS ECCLESIOLOGICAL, CHRISTOLOGICAL

AND TRINITARIAN DIMENSIONS

INTRODUCTION	368
CHAPTER FOUR: THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY	371
Introduction	371

I.	The New Life of the Spirit: The Gift of Intimacy and the Call to Freedom	373
II.	The Objective Structures of the Church as Mediation and Norm of Life in the Spirit	379
	A. Discipleship and the Sacraments	379
	B. The Importance of the Scriptures	382
	C. Hierarchical Office: Authority and Obedience	390
III:	Church as <i>Communio</i> : Love is the Final Norm	399
	Summary	404
CHAPTER FIVE: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY		407
	Introduction	407
I.	Spiritual Life in the Unique Person of Jesus	409
II:	Christological Existence	413
	A. The Centrality of the Cross	414
	B. "Marian" Spirituality	419
III:	Representative Existence	421
	A. <i>Pro me--Pro Multis</i>	421
	B. <i>Communio Sanctorum</i>	423
	C. Inclusive Representation	427
	D. Fruitful in and with the Lord	430
	Summary	438
CHAPTER SIX: THE TRINITARIAN DIMENSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY		441
	Introduction	441
I.	The Ever-Greater God	444
	A. God's Freedom and the Necessity of Prayer	448
	B. Contemplation and Surrender to God's Will	450
	C. Self-surrender and Christian Fruitfulness	454
	D. Petitionary Prayer and Trinitarian Freedom	455
	E. Prayer as Participation in God's Kenosis	460
II.	The Self-surrendering God	462
	A. Christian Selflessness and Personal Freedom	463
	B. Love: Unity in Difference	467
III.	Trinity and World: The Two-Fold Orientation of Christian Spirituality	473
	Summary	483

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS	486
I. The Theological Structure of Christian Life	486
II. Strengths and Weaknesses	490
III. Conclusion	509
 FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	 513
(Volume Two)	
 FOOTNOTES	 514
BIBLIOGRAPHY	594

INTRODUCTION

I. THE BACKGROUND OF THIS STUDY

It is almost twenty-five years ago, on January 25, 1959, that Pope John XXIII announced his intention to call an ecumenical council. In his opening address to the council fathers on October 11, 1962, he made the purpose of the council clear: the renewal of Christian life in the Church. This renewal could be accomplished only if the truth of revelation, expressed in the doctrine of the Church, actually penetrated Christian life and the consciousness of the individual believer. Thus, the task of the council was not primarily to discuss one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church, but to strive to promote the influence of the doctrine of faith in "the numerous fields of human activity, with reference to individuals, to families, and to social life".¹ In his opening prayer, John XXIII called upon the Holy Spirit to renew his wonders "as by a new Pentecost".² In the near twenty years since the close of this "council of the Holy Spirit"³ on December 8, 1965, there can be no doubt that the Church has experienced a period of great change and renewal. In 1976, Pope Paul VI characterized the present period of the Church's history as particularly marked by the Holy Spirit.⁴ Thousands of Christians in all confessions have experienced a "new Pentecost" in the renewal of communal prayer and worship. The charismatic movement has grown enormously in the Catholic Church in the last fifteen years. Prayer groups and small communities where the gifts of tongues, healing, prophecy and



the like are experienced are no longer unusual. Not only the laity, but also priests, sisters, bishops and cardinals have become convinced that the Holy Spirit is at work on many of these phenomena.

Moreover, the council stressed the importance of the mission of the Church in the world, particularly among the poor, oppressed and the un-evangelized. The period since the council has seen enormous changes in the concrete form of the Church's ministry in various regions of the world. Ecclesiology has become a dominant theme in theology as the Church has struggled to come to terms with its true identity and mission.

Perhaps the increased interest in various forms of prayer and in charismatic prayer communities on the one hand, and in the social and political responsibility of the Church on the other, can stand as two poles in this period of change and challenge. In struggling to come to a deeper understanding of her true identity and mission, the Church is consequently struggling to preach the gospel in its concrete relevance. The question concerning the nature of authentic Christian spirituality has been raised again and again.

Yes, the Second Vatican Council has led to a renewed interest in spirituality in general. People have begun to speak more openly about their experience of God in the Spirit and to question what it is concretely that the Spirit is leading them to do. This has led to a rediscovery of spiritual direction

outside the monastery, the seminary and the confessional. As William Barry SJ and William Connolly, SJ point out in their recent book, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*,⁵ the type of person who seeks direction seems to have changed. Not only religious and clergy, but students and housewives and workers from all walks of life know about spiritual direction and seek it out. The increase in number of people who seek direction and the great variety of their backgrounds has led to increased discussion about spirituality and spiritual direction. The number of books and articles published on spirituality and on various aspects of the spiritual life is dramatically increasing.

Not only in the United States and in Europe, but also in Central and South America and in Africa, centers for spirituality and spiritual direction have been founded. What once was a minor concern in theology for a relatively small number of people (under the headings of "ascetical" or "mystical" theology) is now the subject of widespread, renewed theological reflection. Theological reflection on concrete religious experience and the on-going reflection of the large religious orders within the Church on the particular charism of their founders has also led to the question of the relationship between theology and spirituality.

This question, of course, was not raised for the first time after Vatican II. It has been an issue for hundreds of years. In 1949, in a short essay on the history of the concept of

mysticism, Louis Bouyer emphasized that authentic experience of the Spirit is rooted and mediated in the scripture and in the sacramental life of the Church. Spirituality must be born out of the Church's living spiritual interpretation of scripture (which was the heart of theology in its original sense) and in the eucharistic experience of the worshipping community.⁶

In 1950, F. Vandembrouke bemoaned the "divorce" between theology and mysticism which began in the middle ages and took lasting root once scholastic theology of the 12th Century adopted Aristotelian criteria for scientific investigation.⁷ From this point on, according to Vandembrouke, the unity of theology and spirituality is broken. Theology became increasingly separated from scripture and spirituality lost any place of importance in theology.⁸

Since then, many have lamented the fact that in the West, the Spirit has fallen into oblivion, both as an "object" of theological reflection, and as the common medium of theological reflection and Christian life. In German circles one speaks of the *Geistvergessenheit der Theologie*.⁹

This unfortunate situation played a great role in the establishment of an Institute for Spirituality at the school of theology of the Franciscans and Capuchins in Münster in 1979, and served as the first topic of investigation in the first publication of the Institute.¹⁰ There, Anton Rotzetter suggests that spirituality

and theology are to be distinguished, but cannot be separated from each other. Theology is seen as the scientific reflection on faith, which however, can in turn be understood as an act of spirituality, i.e., an existential act of the believer, and which must be undertaken within the context of spirituality as its necessary condition and goal. Spirituality, on the other hand, is the existential impact of the Christ event in the life of the believer. In Jesus Christ, God reveals the deepest truth about himself (theology) and this divine truth is at once the most profound truth of my life (spirituality). According to this view, spirituality actualizes the Spirit of Christ in two ways. First, it actualizes the mission of Jesus in a life of discipleship. Secondly, it becomes more conscious of the dimensions and implications of this discipleship in meditation and reflection. This in turn has "scientific", theological dimensions.¹¹

Rotzetter stresses that spirituality cannot be merely secondary to theology, precisely because theology is constituted by and only has meaning in the concrete life of faith of the Church. Concrete experience of the Spirit of Christ has been constitutive in the development of theology and the appearance of new theological "schools".¹² Theology must not be reduced to abstract speculation. It must also be spirituality, in the sense that it determines and informs praxis.¹³ Unfortunately, he notes, this has rarely been the case. The spiritual dimension of theological reflection has been largely neglected. Dogmatic theology occupied itself with pure theory and left pastoral application

and the concrete questions of the spiritual life to "ascetical" theology. He cites Janssens, Lahitton and Premm as examples of the occasional effort on the part of some theologians to bring out the practical dimension of theology for Christian life, if only in a subsequent and supplementary way.¹⁴ He finds these approaches wanting because they do not exhibit an essential and inner connection between concrete spiritual experience and spirituality on the one hand, and theological reflection on the other. Spirituality remains something "added on" at the end. As long as this is the case, the tragic rift between theology and spirituality, between "scientific"-theological and "edifying"-pious literature cannot be healed.¹⁵

On the other hand, spirituality must be reflected upon and accounted for theologically if it is to escape being purely subjective and arbitrary. Neither of the traditional "disciplines" of ascetical or mystical theology seems to Rotzetter to be capable of contributing to the restoration of the unity between theology and spirituality. He cites Guardini, Ratzinger, Rahner, Hemmerle and Küng as examples of a genuine integration, a kind of theology of spirituality.¹⁶ Here, spirituality is not merely a supplement to theology, but constitutes itself as theology.¹⁷ Christian doctrine is not something in and for itself; it must be reflected upon from the perspective of its realization in the life of the believer. Such a theology of spirituality is at once a theology of the believing subject. It asks questions like: "What makes someone a believing Christian?", "What

does authentic Christian life look like?" It is also a phenomenology of Christian life as it has appeared in various concrete, historical forms.¹⁸

In a small footnote indicating the relationship between spirituality and the "spiritual interpretation" of scripture which formed the foundation of patristic theology, Rotzetter mentions how significant the work of Henri de Lubac SJ has been for spirituality.¹⁹ He follows an earlier article of Josef Sudbrack SJ, which specifically addresses the question as to the place of spirituality within theology as a whole.²⁰ Sudbrack sees two main "classical" directions. Authors like Tanqueray understood ascetical or mystical theology (and so, spirituality) as an intensification of moral life and so part of moral theology. Others, like Garrigou-Lagrange, saw spirituality as a kind of learned mysticism, and so, the crown of dogmatic theology. Sudbrack points out that de Lubac's central concern was the recovery of the unity of theology and spirituality lost after the patristic period. Rotzetter agrees with Sudbrack that in de Lubac, a new vision of unity and fullness, founded in the spiritual interpretation of the scriptures appears: unity as the whole mystery of the sacred scriptures, Christ and the Church; fullness as exegesis, dogmatics and moral theology come together in an all-encompassing peak in spirituality.²¹ It is a pity that Rotzetter does not give de Lubac more attention, having recognized his great importance. Even more puzzling is his virtual silence with respect to the other figure mentioned in Sudbrack's article: Hans Urs von Balthasar. As we shall see, Balthasar's own

theology is just the kind of objective theology of spirituality which Rotzetter calls for.

Sudbrack sees in Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* an important attempt at an integral and therefore spiritual theology for our time.²² He correctly identifies Balthasar's central concern: the disintegration of Christian life into a growing multiplicity of individual disciplines and isolated perspectives. To heal this breach, Balthasar strives for that uniquely Christian "universality" which is born, not of an arbitrary dilettantism nor of a superficial syncretism, but of spiritual deepening, a return to the living source of faith in the contemplation of the gestalt of God's revelation in Jesus Christ as mediated in the Church through word and sacrament: in a word, "in-folding" (*Einfaltung*).²³

Sudbrack suggests that in this sense, theology is born out of believing contemplation and is nothing other than a propositional formulation and a scientific differentiation of the *Schau der Gestalt*.²⁴ Such a scientific, reflective activity does not deserve the name theology if it does not have its source and its continuing medium in this believing contemplation.²⁵

In his *Method of Theology*, Bernard Lonergan stresses the absolutely essential significance of conversion as the basis of Christian living and the objectification of conversion as the foundation of theology.²⁶ The foundational reality of theology is the personal existential conversion

of the human spirit as a result of being touched by God who floods our hearts with his love.²⁷ Faith is the knowledge born of religious love; therefore, theology can only be done with the "eye of love".²⁸ We can only know God because of the gift of his love--when we are in the "dynamic state of being in love".²⁹ The purification of theological categories is effected "in the measure that theologians themselves attain authenticity through religious, moral, and intellectual conversion".³⁰ Lonergan insists that genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. The central importance that Lonergan ascribes to conversion and love in theological methodology points to the unity of theology and spiritual life about which we have been talking.

More recently, W. Kasper has addressed the problem of the separation between theology and spirituality. In an introductory essay to the published lectures delivered at the convention of Catholic dogmatic and fundamental theologians held in Munich in January, 1979, Kasper notes the growing criticism that theology has become too "intellectual" and for many, spiritually sterile.³¹ He too traces this complaint back to the 12th Century, in the time when theology took an official place at the university and began to consider itself as an "academic" science. He refers to the work of the Tübingen theologian J. S. Drey, who early in the 19th Century addressed this problem and saw the real defect of academic theology in the alienation of dialectics and mysticism. Kasper understands Drey's goal to have been a theology which was based

on an interior point of view and, going beyond speculative, hair-splitting subtleties and abstract philosophy, sought not just isolated individual aspects, but the organic coherence of the whole.³²

Kasper too notes that in our century, Hans Urs von Balthasar has often repeated this criticism and has striven for an approach which could restore the unity between dogmatics and spirituality. Taking up Balthasar's suggestion that spirituality is the "subjective side of dogmatic theology", i.e., the living, personal actualization and realization of God's self-revelation, Kasper stresses that spirituality and dogmatic theology belong together. Dogmatics without spirituality becomes a petrified objectivity. Spirituality without dogmatic reflection becomes an arbitrary, enthusiastic subjectivity. He captures the point quite well in a reformulation of a well known expression of Kant: theological concepts without religious experiences are empty; religious experiences without theological concepts are blind.³³ Kasper points out that this problematical situation ultimately raises the hermeneutical question of the discernment of spirits. This requires a renewal of pneumatology, the "theology" of the Holy Spirit. According to Kasper, the problem of the spiritual dimension of theology can only be approached and solved pneumatologically.³⁴

In view both of the renewed interest in spirituality and in the repeated call for a spiritual renewal

of theology, it seems to me that the theological work of Hans Urs von Balthasar offers a unique opportunity to come to a better understanding of the true nature and center of Christian spirituality. Precisely because Balthasar sees theology and spirituality as two aspects of a living whole, his theological reflections can offer a solid foundation for an understanding of authentic life in the Spirit.³⁵

Particularly in the Church today, as it experiences "charismatic" renewal in so many forms and areas, it is necessary to recall that renewal means return to the living source of faith: Jesus Christ, present in the living Spirit as the unique, unsurpassable gestalt of the self-surrendering trinitarian love. In the vitality and beauty of the great diversity of Church life, it is important to see the essential structure and characteristic dimensions of all forms of life in the Spirit.

II. THE PRESENT STUDY

A. THE GOAL AND STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to come to a better understanding of the true nature of authentic Christian spirituality. What are the essential dimensions or characteristics of "life in the Spirit" or of experience of the Spirit? Implied of course, is the question as to the person

and role of the Holy Spirit. We propose to investigate the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar guided by these questions. Thus, the two-fold structure of the present study: in the first part we shall attempt to come to a better understanding of the person and the role of the Spirit; in the second part we shall attempt to characterize authentic Christian spirituality. We shall approach Balthasar's "pneumatology" from the perspective of spirituality and see how his pneumatology manifests certain elements essential to an adequate theology of the spiritual life.

Balthasar has written that Christian "mysticism" is strictly and irrevocably related to the self-revelation of God in the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. It is essentially trinitarian, christological and ecclesiological.³⁶ This is because the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the Church are the three essential aspects of the single mystery of God's self-revelation and communication in Jesus Christ to all men and women.³⁷ This is true not only of extraordinary experience of the Spirit (mysticism in the narrow sense of the term), but also of the universal experience of faith in the Church.³⁸ This conviction of Balthasar is the basis for the three-fold division of each part of this study.

In the first part of the study, we shall inquire as to the person and role of the Spirit in the Trinity, in the Incarnation and in the Church. In the second part of the study, we shall present

the ecclesiological, Christological and trinitarian dimensions of authentic Christian spirituality which emerge from Balthasar's understanding of the Holy Spirit. At the risk of over-simplification, one could view the first part of this study as an exposition of the pneumatological theology of Balthasar and the second part as the corresponding theological spirituality. With these "labels", we wish to draw attention to the central role that the Holy Spirit plays in Balthasar's understanding of the central mystery of faith, and therefore, in his theology as a whole. Secondly, we wish to indicate that the "spirituality" which is based on this understanding of the role of the Spirit in the mystery of faith is discussed from a theological point of view. What we are interested in is the objective ecclesiological, Christological, and trinitarian structure of Christian spirituality rather than the particular subjective experiences which individual believers have of the Spirit.³⁹

B. WHAT THIS STUDY DOES NOT ATTEMPT

We have just emphasized the fact that we are interested in the objective structure of Christian spirituality in its three essential dimensions. In so doing, we wish to make it clear that we are not going to address many topics in the area of the concrete, subjective praxis which are certainly important and of great current interest. It is not our purpose to offer practical suggestions for the leading of a Christian life in a concrete

situation, although that which emerges can certainly be a source of thought, challenge and even perhaps useful for discernment in the concrete situation. Our purpose is to characterize theologically what makes a spirituality authentically "Christian". We have not examined the history of spirituality, the various spiritualities of the great religious orders and movements in the history of the Church, or the spiritualities which may be associated with specific "states of life" or office within the Church. Such an enterprise would be valuable and complementary to the present study. However, one cannot do everything! In trying to make clear the dogmatic foundation of authentic Christian spirituality, we hope to let the center and heart of true Christian spirituality appear. In all the surprising variety of concrete, historical spiritual life, there is a unifying norm or canon.

This norm is no written law or rule of perfection, but the living Spirit of Jesus Christ. But to say that the Spirit is Lord and living norm of our new existence in Christ is in need of explanation. What does it mean to say that we live in the Spirit? That the Spirit is Lord and norm of my life? The present study attempts to show how Balthasar answers these questions. We shall see which aspects of Christian spirituality Balthasar especially stresses and perhaps gain a few general criteria for the discernment of spirits.

C. THE METHOD OF THIS STUDY

We have already indicated the goal and structure of this study, as well as the necessary limitation of its scope. Perhaps a brief word on the method of investigation can be helpful. We propose to gather what Balthasar has written on the Holy Spirit and on life in the Spirit from a theological corpus stretching over forty years and to present it thematically in the way we have already mentioned. A systematic, theological presentation and explication of such an enormous amount of material cannot claim to be exhaustive. Nonetheless, the central lines of Balthasar's understanding of the Spirit and of Christian life clearly appear.

It did not seem important to indicate the chronological relationship between various references, since Balthasar's entire theological achievement manifests an astonishing inner unity and consistency. It does not seem to evidence any significant changes or turns.⁴⁰

We hope to help English speaking readers in particular to become more familiar with the basic features of Balthasar's pneumatology and spirituality. Occasionally comparisons shall be made with other theologians, insofar as it is helpful (and possible!) to situate Balthasar in contemporary theological discussion. However, the study itself should be understood chiefly as a systematic presentation and explication of Balthasar's position. For this reason, we have

waited until the end of the study to present our own critical observations, questions and suggestions, although throughout the study, important areas for further thought and questioning are pointed out.

III. THE STATE OF THE RESEARCH

Although the contributions which Hans Urs von Balthasar has made to a renewal of pneumatology and spirituality have occasionally been recognized and praised,⁴¹ it is still a sad fact that Balthasar remains unknown to many. This is especially true in the English-speaking world. This seems to depend not only on the lack of good English translations.⁴² His truly great and "classic" works⁴³ are only now being translated into English. What is known of Balthasar through his smaller, often extremely polemical books, has led many to write him off as a conservative reactionary. He certainly seems to be championed by the extremely conservative circles in the United States. Be that as it may, it is important to try to get to the real center and fullness of his thought. And when one tries to do that, one quickly realizes that ready-made labels do not help. Despite his often trenchant criticism of developments in the Church in the wake of Vatican II, it must be acknowledged that Balthasar was one of the leading theologians (with Przywara, de Lubac, Fessard, Daniélou, Bouillard, Congar, Hugo Rahner and Karl Rahner) who played a decisive role in

rediscovering the wealth of the Catholic tradition, especially the Fathers, and in freeing Catholic theology from the chains of Neoscholasticism. It is only because of the work of these men that the council was possible! Hopefully the profound depth of Balthasar's thought will be recognized more and more in the coming years.

A good number of dissertations have appeared in the last ten or fifteen years about his theology in general, and about particular aspects of it. Many of these studies refer to or treat of the Holy Spirit in some secondary way. M. Kehl's *Kirche als Institution* was the first to treat of the Spirit in Balthasar's work in an extended fashion: specifically, from the point of view of Christian gestalt and ecclesial institution. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate ground for the unity of structure and love in the Church since, as the personified, objectified love between Father and Son, he appears in economic gestalt both as "determinative-institutional" and as "liberating-universalizing".⁴⁵

The first dissertation on Balthasar's pneumatology in general has been published recently by K. Tossou.⁴⁶ As an "attempt at a systematic exposition of the various pneumatological statements in Balthasar's vast work", it is a good introduction to what might loosely be called Balthasar's "pneumatology".⁴⁷ Tossou correctly points out the fact, which Balthasar repeats in the *Forward*, that Balthasar has never written a single, comprehensive treatment of the Spirit

and is skeptical about the possibility of a systematic pneumatology. Tossou prefers to speak of the "Spirit-problematic" in Balthasar. It seems to me that this general, systematic exposition of the "Spirit-problematic" in Balthasar is presented from a definite perspective. It's particular focus seems to be the Holy Spirit in terms of the eschatological fulfillment of man, world and history as the fulfillment of God's love for his creation.⁴⁸ Because of this particular focus, the topic of spirituality as such is mentioned only indirectly.⁴⁹ Tossou gives a good overview of several of the recent dissertations on Balthasar which in some way treat of or refer to the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ It seems unnecessary to duplicate his efforts here. Instead, it may be helpful to indicate what has been written about spirituality in Balthasar's work.

Christian spirituality in the work of Balthasar has not yet been the subject of a longer study. In a dissertation completed in 1974, M. Albus considers briefly a few important themes. He points out how for Balthasar, Christian existence is kenotic because the life of the Church in the Spirit comes from the cross.⁵¹ In the power of the resurrection, the Christian who lives in the Paschal Mystery has the sure hope that the self-surrender with Christ on the cross is the true path to life and the only true fulfillment of the world.⁵² The one thing necessary for the Christian is to remain in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, in God's saving action for the world. To remain

in the love revealed in the cross and resurrection of Christ, to be transformed by this form of the trinitarian love, is for Balthasar, the essence of Christian contemplation. In the exemplary attitude of Mary, the Christian is called to an ecclesial existence flowing from and nourished by the loving, adoring contemplation of the gestalt of Christ. This existence is beyond the dualism of action-contemplation, since God draws the believer into his own saving activity for the world.⁵³

W. Löser, in an excellent dissertation on Balthasar as interpreter of the Fathers published in 1975, also considers the formation of Christian life beyond the dualism of action and contemplation.⁵⁴ He shows how Balthasar's thought is not only influenced by but also modifies the Greek patristic tradition, which gave a clear priority to contemplation over action, while at the same time ascribing a "more" on fruitfulness to the active life over the contemplative. The dualism which is manifest in Evagrius, Cassian, Gregory and Augustine is due to the enormous influence of Greek philosophy and the difference between *vita activa* and *contemplativa* found in the Stoa, Aristotle and Plato. Against a classical "schema of ascent" which gave a higher value to a self-sufficient interior direction of attention solely to God in loving contemplation, and a lesser value to "external" activity in public life and love of neighbor, Balthasar insists that the "descent" of God out of love for the world has the primacy. According to Löser, this means that beyond the dualism of action and contemplation, Christian life

is life in God's engagement for the world. Contemplation is union with an active God.⁵⁵ Löser points out that such a unity of action and contemplation is revealed in the trinitarian dimension of Jesus' life.⁵⁶ All action is truly fruitful when it is one with God's saving action. To remain in God's action, to remain at the source of all fruitfulness, is the essence of all true Christian contemplation in the Spirit. Thus, living in God's engagement (*In Gottes Einsatz Leben*) is the center and unifying bond of Christian spirituality.⁵⁷

Since the topic of spirituality has as yet been touched upon only briefly, it seems a worthwhile endeavor to examine it in a more detailed fashion, especially in terms of its dogmatic, pneumatological foundation.

IV. BALTHASAR'S THEOLOGY IN GENERAL

A. FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

The central influences on Balthasar's life and thought have been noted and discussed in virtually every dissertation on Balthasar's theology. There are in addition a number of good retrospectives on his life and work available--a few in English too.⁵⁸ It can therefore suffice to mention briefly the absolutely central figures.

At the beginning of Balthasar's adult life stands

a figure which has remained the very heart both of his personal existence and of his theological work: Ignatius of Loyola. His influence is clearest in Balthasar's dynamic understanding of the ever-greater God, *Deus semper maior*, and in the corresponding posture of the believer which seeks to do all for the ever-greater glory of God, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. Balthasar's emphasis on the inner relationship between the Incarnation and the cross, on "thinking with the Church", on ecclesial obedience, and his understanding of Christian existence as trinitarian mission: *contemplativus in actione*, all reveal Balthasar's Ignatian roots.

It was Henri de Lubac who opened the world of the Fathers, particularly Origen, to the young Jesuit Balthasar. Here is where Balthasar found a truly unified "sense" for the whole of the mystery of God's revelation. Here is where one should look for the roots of Balthasar's own contemplative theology. Balthasar's theology, like that of the Fathers, is rooted in and lives from the ecclesial contemplation of the scriptures. It was de Lubac who sought to retrieve the lost unity between theology and spirituality by going back to the Fathers and their "spiritual" interpretation of the scriptures. We shall see later how much Balthasar's understanding of the Church, scripture and sacrament is influenced by the Fathers and their modern interpreter de Lubac.

In the work of E. Przywara, he found a philosophical foundation for the positivity of the finite world

in the notion of the analogy of being. The concept of analogy, based on the famous formulation of Lateran IV, became the central, all-encompassing pattern of thought for Balthasar's understanding of the relationship between Creator and creature, grace and nature, and faith and reason. It is ultimately what enables Balthasar to move Catholic theology beyond the limitations of Neoscholasticism.

In his long study of and discussion with Karl Barth concerning the relationship between *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*, the philosophical notion of analogy became theologically concretized in the Incarnate Word, specifically in the cross of Christ as the unsurpassable revelation of God's glory, and therefore, the concrete analogy of being and the center of history.

From Goethe, Balthasar derives the notion of gestalt so central to the theological aesthetics which he developed as an understanding of the perception of and transformation in the gestalt of Jesus Christ as the appearance of self-surrendering trinitarian love.

Finally, we mention Adrienne von Speyr, who according to Balthasar, showed him the way from Ignatius to John, the comprehensive horizon of Balthasar's theology. It was the theological mission of Adrienne von Speyr, through personal participation in the mystery of Christ's utter abandonment on Holy Saturday, to shed new light on the identity between obedience unto death--death on a cross, and the ever-greater

glory of the trinitarian love. This is the central truth and mystery of Holy Saturday. Christ's obedience in the abandonment to hell and the consequent saving, representative solidarity with sinners is the expression of the infinite power of God's self-surrendering kenotic love.

B. A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Here again, in view of the large number of very good surveys and expositions of Balthasar's theology which are available, it seems appropriate to reduce our remarks to an absolute minimum.⁵⁹

Balthasar once compared his theological work with the finger of John the Baptist, pointing to the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, unfolded in the immense fullness of its reception in the history of the Church, and in particular in the mediation of the saints.⁶⁰ This revelation is not merely "information" about God, but the appearance and communication of divine life itself in Jesus Christ. The fullness of revelation, therefore, does not lie in the multiplicity of theological-dogmatic propositions, but in the glory of God's kenotic love on the cross, a love "greater than which cannot be conceived".

The gestalt of this love, its force and convincing power, makes a merely "disinterested", observational, or "neutral" judgment about its truth impossible. The only posture appropriate to the gestalt of

God's love revealed in the self-surrender of the Incarnate Son on the cross is faith--understood as surrender: the act of recognition and acceptance of the truth of what God has done. This obedience of faith is the only way to the objective truth of God's self-revelation. It means, further, the readiness to make the gestalt of the trinitarian love revealed on the cross the "law" of my life.⁶¹ This posture is a unity in which seeing and being grasped by what is seen, in which receiving and surrendering are inseparably one.⁶²

For Balthasar, the theoretical, speculative posture of theology as the "science of faith"⁶³ understood as a never-ending reflection in words and concepts on the incomprehensible love of God, must grow out of this unity. The New Testament has no place for merely theoretical "truths". The "content" of faith is the concrete love of God actualized in one's own existence.⁶⁴ Theology as the "understanding of faith for the truth it has received" presupposes both the effort of reason and the effort of Christian discipleship.⁶⁵ Thus, for Balthasar, the experience of faith and the reflection on it always possesses two moments: the perception of the gestalt of God's revelation and the transformation by which the perceiver is grasped and informed by this gestalt. The gestalt of God's self-revelation has not appeared in order to be observed or looked at, but in order to transform and inform the perceiver and so, to bestow a real share of the trinitarian life which appears in the gestalt of Christ.

Balthasar notes that theology had from the very

beginning a largely contemplative, even mystical dimension, which didn't call its "scientific" nature into question. It tries, as far as possible, to deepen faith in understanding through a contemplative "entrance" into the depths of the mystery of God's revelation. Even though this mystery cannot be mastered through logic and concepts, and therefore certainly cannot be adequately understood and formulated in theological propositions, nonetheless, theology has the responsibility to try to think and to speak clearly and intelligibly. Theology, like every science, must indicate and justify the rules of such thinking and speaking which are appropriate to its particular undertaking. But for Balthasar, the most authentic way of speaking and thinking about the mystery of God's revelation is living a holy life. For him, the most authentic commentaries on the Incarnate Word are the saints: the genuine ones given the Church by the Holy Spirit. They are the ones who have entered into the mystery of God's love. Those who love, know the most about God! One looks forward with great interest to the final part of Balthasar's trilogy, *Theologik*, which will address this issue for the first time in detail. Balthasar has already indicated that he has worked out a general sketch and the Holy Spirit will occupy a central place.⁶⁶

C. BALTHASAR'S "METHOD"

A word on Balthasar's "method". I put the word method in quotation marks because Balthasar himself

never tires of emphasizing the non-systematic nature of his theology.⁶⁷ The inconceivable fullness of God's self-revelation cannot be captured in any system. This is for Balthasar the main error and the ultimate cause for the failure of Neoscholasticism.⁶⁸ The "whole" which is the fullness of God can only be approached from fragmentary, partial perspectives, each of which catches sight of something of the central, unapproachable light of God in his utter, incomprehensible fullness.

Despite this antipathy toward "system", Balthasar's work is not without method. When one reads the various studies on Balthasar, one finds a number of characterizations of his method. It has been called "theological phenomenology"⁶⁹, "trinitarian integration"⁷⁰, "a method of in-folding"⁷¹, a method of "inductive convergence"⁷² and "structural theology"⁷³. All of these characterizations point basically to the same thing. For Balthasar, theology is always the attempt to get to the center, to the indivisible whole of the mystery of God's trinitarian love, revealed in Jesus Christ and communicated in history through the Church. Theology must first be a contemplative-meditative "in-folding" (*Einfaltung*) into the the mystery of God's love before it can be a real unfolding (*Entfaltung*) of its inner depths. Theological activity, therefore, exists in a two-fold movement of in-folding and unfolding. More than most theologians, Balthasar stresses the priority of the contemplative posture not only in the practical-existential dimension of theology

but also--and especially--in the speculative-theoretical dimension of theology. In its original sense, theory (*theōria*) is precisely contemplation, the highest level of being, and not just the abstract "theory" of modern usage. The fundamental synthesis of believing contemplation is for Balthasar the basis for all subsequent analysis. Each individual theological question or aspect can only be approached in terms of this single whole, and the purpose of analysis must be to show the relationship of a particular aspect to the whole.⁷⁴

Balthasar's theology clearly manifests its contemplative foundation. The reader senses immediately that it is far closer to the contemplative-symbolic approach of the Fathers than to the modern critical-analytic approaches since the Enlightenment.⁷⁵ This is especially evident in Balthasar's use of scripture, which for many exegetes would be very problematic. It is perhaps one reason why Balthasar's theology has not enjoyed wider reception. It appears to many as pre-critical and naive. It also explains why Balthasar's theology is so difficult to analyze and criticize in terms of more usual and current theological categories.⁷⁶

It seems to me that the best term to characterize Balthasar's method is the broadest of those mentioned. His is essentially a contemplative theology. Its heart is the living gestalt of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Its foundation is the obedient contemplation in faith of this gestalt. Balthasar attaches far more

importance to the structure of the gestalt itself than to the subjective structure of the believing subject so important in a transcendental approach. Precisely because of the absolute priority of the divine gestalt of revelation, one can see the importance of the "aesthetic" and "phenomenological" dimensions of his approach. And, yet, one is hesitant to use these terms, since they are so easily misunderstood. It is clear that Balthasar's approach is far from a merely inner-worldly theory of beauty and aesthetic "taste". And while the phenomenon of the gestalt of Jesus Christ remains the center of the gaze of the believer as theologian, Balthasar's "phenomenology" has nothing to do with the philosophical program of Husserl and its bracketing of the ontological question.

The term "contemplative" can, of course, be misunderstood as well. Still, I don't think it misleads as much as some of the other characterizations might. Contemplation is, for Balthasar, no merely passive, unaffected observation. He stresses the transformative aspect of contemplation in the power of the gestalt to draw the perceiver into itself, into its own transforming, saving power for the world, and so to radically transform him. The God which a Christian contemplates is a God who acts in the on-going drama of salvation history. As we shall see in this study, Balthasar stresses, in a typically Johannine way, the essential connection between contemplation and mission. Ultimately, the very gestalt, the "image" or "*eidōs*" of God in the world in Jesus Christ is precisely One who is sent.

V. DEVELOPMENT OR DEEPENING?

In Balthasar's theology, the trinitarian love revealed on the cross of Christ remains the unsurpassable center of an ever-deeper reflection, from ever new perspectives. It is the constantly changing perspective of the central, abiding contemplation of Christ that constitutes the essential unity and integrity of Balthasar's enormous theological work. Virtually everyone who has written on Balthasar agrees that one cannot really speak of a "development", much less of a change or break in this movement of contemplative deepening.⁷⁷ What Balthasar once wrote about Barth could be applied to Balthasar himself: "Least of all has Barth himself changed. While his dogmatic work has grown in fullness and depth, it has remained astonishingly true to itself."⁷⁸

Even the difference between many of the smaller books, which since the Second Vatican Council have often manifested a strong polemical tone, and the great works like *Herrlichkeit*, *Theodramatik*, *Das betrachtende Gebet*, *Das Ganze im Fragment*, as well as the *Skizzen zur Theologie*, cannot be considered as an indication of a "change" in his essential direction. In all of his writing, he understands his theological work as response to God's love, an answer which ultimately can only be made with one's whole existence. Consequently, the challenge which is expressed in his theological work, whether in the great "classics" or in the

shorter, more polemical and apologetical works, is the same: unconditional surrender to the gift and demands of God's love revealed in the cross of Christ as the *unum necessarium* of Christian existence.

VI. THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Here we reach the decisive point: the necessity of the human existential response to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Faith is the fundamental, obedient response to God's action in Jesus Christ. The many "ways" in which Christians attempt to live their faith, the existential "forms" in which the "content" of the confession of the Church's faith is translated into everyday living--this is what Balthasar understands under the term "spiritualities". In a certain sense, one could say that there are as many spiritualities as there are persons, since each individual is called into discipleship in an utterly unique way. This is precisely what, for Balthasar, constitutes his or her personhood in the theological sense of the term. But all these "spiritualities" have their fundamental, *a priori* unity in the one person and mission of Jesus Christ. Any particular spirituality in the Church which is truly authentic is nothing else but a variation of the one, indivisible discipleship of Christ, who in the Gospel calls men and women to follow him.⁷⁹ These variations of the one "way"--the way of the Lord to the cross--are not due merely to the

diversity of concrete historical individuals and situations, but are the specific work of the Holy Spirit, who mediates the specific, personalizing mission for each person "from above".⁸⁰ The mission of the Spirit, however, is not to establish a new "way" or "life" or "spirituality" of his own. Life "in the Spirit" means life in and through Jesus Christ. Therefore, a proper understanding of the fundamental dimensions of Christian life in the Spirit will be based on an authentic reflection on the central mystery of our salvation, the Christ event. In other words, spirituality as *theologia spiritualis* is nothing but the mystical side of the objective dogma of the Church, *theologia mystica*. Spirituality is the subjective side of dogma.⁸¹

This subjective dimension is not to be confused with a private, arbitrary, religious enthusiasm. It is the personal, living actualization of the "objective" Word of God as received and mediated by the Church through the Spirit. Just as Mary is the *Realsymbol* of the Church, who through God's grace is able to receive and mediate his revelation in a perfectly adequate way, so too, the *a priori* universal and fundamental spirituality of the Church is "Marian". It is the simple, but total, openness and readiness before God to be sent, a mission obedience which ultimately is a trinitarian mystery.

VII. "THEOLOGY AND HOLINESS"

Already in 1948, in his essay "*Theologie und Heiligkeit*"⁸², Balthasar announced his fundamental goal: to overcome the divorce between theology and spirituality which has reigned in the West since the re-discovery of Aristotelianism in the 12-13th Centuries. This is where Balthasar locates the fatal change from a "kneeling theology" to a "sitting theology".

Since the classical Scholasticism of the 12th and 13th Centuries, there have been very few theologians among the officially proclaimed saints. Balthasar holds this for an extremely telling fact. Until that time, the great theologian-saints were pillars of the Church who were able to carry and to nourish the life of the Church because their personal lives revealed the fullness of Christian doctrine and their doctrine revealed the fullness of Christian life.⁸³ Precisely because of this unity of knowing and living, the great doctors of the Church were able to become true pastors, shepherds of the flock. The personal union of *doctor* and *pastor* found in the first centuries of the Church is not at all unusual. Most all of the great theologians were bishops, a few even popes: Irenaeus, Cyprian, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Epiphanius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Theodoret, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Isidore--and Leo and Gregory the Great. These figures, says Balthasar, are integral

personalities. They lived what they taught in such a direct, perhaps even naive way, that the dualism of later times between dogmatics and spirituality is totally unknown to them. This is true not only of the relationship between their personal life and their theological work, but also of their theological work in itself. Balthasar points out how silly it would be to try to classify the works of such authors as Irenaeus, Basil, Origen or Augustine into "dogmatic" works on the one hand, and "spirituality" on the other.⁸⁴

This integrity is still manifest in the life and work of Anselm, Bede, Bernhard, and Peter Damian. The immediacy and "naïveté" of this union between insight and life is challenged with the influence of Aristotelianism. This brought a new clearness, preciseness and organization to intellectual activity in the form of new "scientific" principles. On the other hand, philosophy began to be treated as an independent discipline and gradually lost its inner connection with theology, still rooted in the scriptures. Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas of Aquinas were the last great theologians, according to Balthasar, who were able to achieve an integration. After that, dogmatic theology became more and more characterized by the conceptual subtleties of the new "secular" philosophy and alienated the "spiritual" man, who looked to theology for spiritual nourishment. Gradually a new "science" of Christian life began to appear alongside dogmatics. Its origins were in the mysticism of the middle ages and by the time of the *devotio moderna*, it had become fully

independent.⁸⁵ This led to the division in theology between dogmatic theology and ascetical-mystical theology. The former tended to be "objective", "scientific" exposition and interpretation of revelation, whereas the latter became more and more focused upon "subjective" and "existential" states and experiences of the soul. This mutual impoverishment led to the modern situation where "spirituality" in general, and the concrete missions and religious experience of the saints in particular, are hardly of importance for dogmatic theology. On the other hand, much writing in "spirituality" has been so concentrated on mystical states and ascetical principles and norms, that it frequently doesn't manifest any obvious connection to the central dogmas of revelation. As Balthasar describes it, one looks in vain for a living organism and finds instead either a skeleton without flesh--the traditional dogmatics, or flesh with no bones--that type of "pious" literature which is a mixture of asceticism, spirituality, mysticism and rhetoric without real substance, and without the real capacity to nourish the faith.⁸⁶

In view of this situation, Balthasar makes two suggestions to help overcome the separation between dogmatic theology and spirituality. First, for dogmatic theology in its present state, he stresses the importance of the saints as *loci theologici*. They are new gifts to the Church from the Holy Spirit, who in their divinely given missions, shed new light on the mystery of faith.⁸⁷ They are a new "interpretation of revelation", an enrichment of the Church's doctrine

in new, perhaps previously unseen aspects. Their whole existence is a "theological phenomenon" and calls for a new "supernatural phenomenology" in theology in order to properly understand them.⁸⁸ Balthasar explicitly refers to Bremond and speaks of a "metaphysics of the saints".⁸⁹

Secondly, for spirituality in its present state, he stresses that life in the Spirit must live from and toward God's self-revelation, which is expressed in the scripture, sacrament and dogma of the Church. Spirituality should not be concerned primarily with particular states or experiences of the individual. Spirituality is the "subjective side" of dogma, the personal actualization of the Christ event. As such, each particular "spirituality" must be judged for authenticity according to its transparency for God's revelation as expressed in scripture and in the dogmatic interpretation of the Church. The creed is not only norm for dogmatic statements, but also norm for the spiritual life. As we have already indicated, this is the perspective of the present study: to identify the dogmatic structure of Christian spirituality.

Balthasar's suggestions for dogmatics and spirituality "in its present state" were made over thirty years ago. Much has been accomplished in the time since then which has contributed to a more living, spiritual theology and a more substantial, theological spirituality. But the concern which Balthasar expressed then is still important today. For Balthasar himself,

this essay is programmatic for his entire theological "mission". The Johannine unity between knowledge (*Jo* 1, 1ff) and love (*1 Jo* 4, 7ff), between truth (*Jo* 14, 17) and life (*Jo* 6, 63) in the Spirit characterizes his efforts as writer, publisher and founder of a secular institute. After "*Theologie und Heiligkeit*" there follows a long series of essays and books which shows that his concern about how the Holy Spirit has been "forgotten" in theology and in Christian life has stamped and molded his entire theological enterprise: *Der Laie und der Ordenstand* (1948), *"Spiritualität"* (1958), *Herrlichkeit II* (1962), *Wer ist ein Christ?* (1965), *Einfaltungen* (1969), and the two collections of essays, *Spiritus Creator* (1967) and *Pneuma und Institution* (1974). Balthasar again emphasizes this in an interview with M. Albus in 1975.⁹⁰

All of this is important to keep in mind when one speaks of "pneumatology" and its place and function in Balthasar's work. It has already been noted that one can only use this term loosely in reference to Balthasar's treatment of the Holy Spirit. Balthasar offers "fragments of a doctrine of the Spirit" rather than a systematic theology of the Spirit. In the Introduction to *Spiritus Creator* he writes that a theology which allows the Spirit to be treated thematically is rare and extremely difficult. He cautions the reader against expecting such from him, and claims not even to have attempted such a theology.⁹¹ For Balthasar, the danger of "systematizing" the ever-greater God would be especially acute in a pneumatology.

Precisely in the person of the Holy Spirit, God is the utterly free One, "*der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes*"⁹². Balthasar suggests that God is not only always greater than our words about him, but in the Spirit, as the ever-greater fruit of the love between the Father and Son, God is "ever-greater" in his very "essence".

It is impossible to overlook the decisive role played by the Spirit in Balthasar's theology--despite all these warnings and disclaimers. In his "pneumatology" we find a bridge between spirituality and dogmatic theology. Pneumatology as spirituality always has a practical, existential meaning for Balthasar. Theology has its origin and goal in the life of faith in the Church. It should help the believer to deepen his life in the Spirit of Christ. "Logical" and "existential" interpretation of revelation must not be separated from each other. We have seen how such a division has led in the past to pious literature of questionable theological foundation and to an unbelievable, unconvincing theology, which cannot nourish the faith of the believers. Balthasar asks whether in the future one ought to distinguish between theology and spirituality.⁹³ In an essay on the unity of theology and spirituality⁹⁴, Balthasar notes that the theologies which have proved dynamic and effective are precisely those which carried their spiritualities within and not merely alongside.⁹⁵

One can see two directions or perspectives in Balthasar's own work which exist in this dynamic

relationship between theology and spirituality. His own theological achievement is essentially informed and deeply marked by the "integral" theologian-saints of the patristic and the high-scholastic periods, as well as by the person and mission of several modern saints. Among these are Ignatius of Loyola and Thérèse of Lisieux. One can point to the enormous significance which Balthasar attributes to Adrienne von Speyr. Balthasar has written that theologically he received more from her than she from him.⁹⁶ It seems as though Balthasar has consciously undertaken his theology--at least in a large part--as an attempt to carry out H. Bremond's notion of a metaphysics of the saints. As an unparalleled example of such an attempt, one could point to the vast documentation of the unity of Balthasar's thought with Adrienne von Speyr's experience in the footnotes of the last volume of *Theodramatik*.⁹⁷ Balthasar goes so far as to claim that to understand his work, one first has to understand Adrienne von Speyr.⁹⁸

Finally one must point to Balthasar's own spiritual experience--particularly the foundational experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius--as determinative of his theological activity. To trace this perspective in Balthasar's work would be to show, so to speak, how Balthasar has tried to "recover" the spiritual dimension of theology.

On the other hand, one can see how in the great variety of theology and spiritual life, Balthasar constantly seeks to identify the center and heart of all authentic life in faith, hope and love.

He constantly emphasizes that all authentic Christian spirituality grows out of the Church's faith in Jesus Christ (which is reflected upon and interpreted dogmatically) and in the implications of this faith: i.e., Trinity and Church.⁹⁹

All true spiritualities in the Church find their unity and their essential communicability and compatibility in a common dogmatic "structure". To trace this perspective would be to show, so to speak, how Balthasar has tried to "recover" the true "objective" theological dimension of spirituality.

The present study takes the second path. It is this second concern of Balthasar's which has determined both the content and the structure of the following investigation. In a correct "dogmatic" understanding of the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the three fundamental aspects of the single mystery of faith: Trinity, Incarnation and Church, Christian spirituality finds its theological foundation and a basis for the development of practical criteria for the discernment of spirits.

P A R T O N E
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T H E S P I R I T O F C H R I S T :

THE PERSON AND ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN THE
TRINITY, THE INCARNATION AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPIRIT IN THE TRINITY

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this study is devoted to dogmatic considerations focused upon the person and role of the Holy Spirit. These considerations form the basis for the understanding of christian life as life in the Spirit, which will be presented in the second part of the study. In this chapter we propose to sketch the essential lines of the understanding of the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity which emerges from the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar. This is not at all an easy task. While the incomprehensible mystery of the saving trinitarian love is the heart and focus of all his theological work,¹ Balthasar has never attempted to make the Trinity or the Holy Spirit the subject of a single, comprehensive and systematic treatment. Indeed, Balthasar has expressed his reserve and distrust of such an endeavor more than once!² If all theology, as the human attempt to understand and to speak about God, is in the danger of trying to comprehend the incomprehensible God--to master the Mystery through logic and conceptualization--, then a special caution is needed in the attempt to speak about the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.³ For, as we shall see, the Holy Spirit is God precisely in his utter freedom. The Holy Spirit is God in his ability to be ever-greater: greater than all human attempts at "systematization".

Thus, Balthasar presents "fragments", "short sketches" rather than a systematic treatise. It would seem that Balthasar sees in such an approach a "method"

more suitable for illuminating aspects of what will always remain mystery. Thus we are faced with the problem to "summarize" as it were, what both from the nature of the subject and the nature of Balthasar's "method" of investigation, does not lend itself to summation. Moreover, it is hard to situate Balthasar in the history of trinitarian doctrine, since he nowhere treats extensively the development of the doctrine. References to and the influence of important classical theologians are surely to be found on particular points. In the course of this chapter the strong influence of two theologians in particular will become apparent: Thomas (and with him, Augustine) and Richard of St. Victor.⁴ By way of introduction, it might be helpful here to mention a few important characteristics of Balthasar's trinitarian theology in the light of these classical approaches.

With Thomas, Balthasar understands the temporal-historical *missio* of the Son as the economic gestalt or form of his eternal *processio*.⁵ Indeed, Balthasar adopts what he refers to as the "scholastic axiom": that the eternal birth of the Son out of the Father is the ultimate ground and necessary presupposition for every form of *processio* (*ad extra* or *ad intra*) out of God. This means concretely that the creation of the world, the Incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are all fundamentally grounded in the immanent Trinity. Balthasar emphasizes that the key to understanding at least something of the mystery of the divinity of Christ and the mystery of the Trinitarian God lies in the notion of mission, of "being sent", a notion which dominates

the fourth gospel.⁶ In choosing the *missio* of the incarnate Son as his starting point, however, Balthasar is using a concept that in traditional trinitarian doctrine came only at the end.⁷

In this sense, Balthasar's approach differs radically from many textbook approaches of (neo-)scholasticism which begin with the immanent Trinity and the eternal procession of the Son from the Father and of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and then treat the mission of the Son in the salvation history of the world.⁸ According to Balthasar, we can only know about Father, Son and Spirit as "trinitarian persons" from the gestalt and behavior of Jesus Christ.⁹ It is only in Jesus Christ that the Trinity is revealed and approachable. Jesus is the one sent by his Father and the one who promises to send the Spirit from the Father. This mission, or as Balthasar calls it, this "existence in mission", has as its presupposition and origin the eternal procession of the Son from the Father and the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and Son.¹⁰

If Balthasar's approach is to be dissociated from the "from above" approach of neo-scholasticism, it is also clear that it is unlike some recent approaches which are often referred to as being "from below".¹¹ For Balthasar, the only possible starting point is the gestalt of Jesus Christ as mediated by Scripture and Tradition. The mystery of the Trinity cannot be inferred, deduced or comprehended through a philosophical notion of absolute Spirit, nor through analogies drawn from the history of the world's religions, nor from the realm of human experience.

Balthasar would certainly agree with W. Kasper, who writes that the true *vestigium trinitatis* is not man, but the God-man Jesus Christ.¹² While human analogies are a certain help, the only proper starting point for an understanding of the Trinity is the economy of salvation.¹³

The second theologian we want to call attention to is Richard of St. Victor. We have mentioned how important the notion of mission is for Balthasar's understanding of the Trinity. It is the relationship between the temporal-historical mission of the Son and his eternal procession from the Father as Son that leads Balthasar to insist that theologically speaking, mission and personal identity are identical. This is true at least, and in a unique way, of the incarnate Son. We shall be able to discuss this more fully in the second chapter of this study. In the trinitarian theology of Richard, Balthasar could draw on a notion of person which is very compatible with his emphasis upon mission. For Balthasar, mission is essentially a relational concept because a mission is constituted by the relationship between the sender, the one sent, and the task to be accomplished. Richard developed a relational notion of person in his trinitarian theology. Until then the classical definition of person was that found in Boethius: *persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia*. The real significance of personality could not be brought to expression. For Richard the key to the real uniqueness and personality of a person is found not so much by asking "what" it is, but "whence" it is. To emphasize the relational reality of the person, Richard suggests a new definition:

intellectualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia.

The use of the term *ex-sistere* includes both of these dimensions: what a person is in itself is being in relation with (or from) another.¹⁴ This shift from substantial thinking to relational thinking is important for Balthasar, since it provides a better way of speaking of the relational reality of the persons of the Trinity. It corresponds further to his understanding of the ultimate reality of all being: not some kind of substance, but self-surrendering love.¹⁵ Moreover, it provides a bridge for Balthasar from Latin trinitarian theology to recent kenotic theology of the Eastern Church.

It is also from Richard that Balthasar finds a more dynamic understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit as the inherent, but utterly new and surprising fruitfulness of the perfect love between Father and Son. Here Richard provides a possible bridge from Latin-Augustinian trinitarian theology, which tends to stress the utter fullness of the one divine love in itself, and Greek trinitarian theology, which tends to stress the infinite outpouring of the fullness of the divine love from the Father.

Having attempted to situate Balthasar's approach to the Trinity at least in an introductory way, we can turn to the subject matter of this chapter: the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity. We shall proceed in five steps. First, we shall briefly indicate Balthasar's salvation history approach to the immanent Trinity. The mission existence of Jesus Christ, concentrated in the cross

and resurrection, is the revelation of the inner-trinitarian love. Secondly, we shall see how Balthasar understands the Holy Spirit as the ever-greater love between Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is God as ever-new, ever-greater. He is the boundless freedom and love of God in person. Thirdly, we shall see in what sense Balthasar understands the Holy Spirit to be the "We" of Father and Son. The Holy Spirit, in unpredictable newness and utter freedom always remains precisely the Spirit of love between Father and Son and can never leave his origin behind. Fourthly, we shall consider the trinitarian notion of person which Balthasar develops. Fifthly, we shall see how this corresponds to his kenotic understanding of the immanent Trinity.

I. THE UNION OF THE IMMANENT AND ECONOMIC TRINITY

As W. Kasper points out¹⁶, the thesis of K. Rahner¹⁷ that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice-versa has found a broad consensus among theologians of many different confessions. Balthasar is among those theologians, who accept Rahner's thesis in a modified form.¹⁸ According to Balthasar, the only starting point for the attempt to know and speak about the immanent Trinity is the gestalt of Jesus Christ, his life-in-mission, particularly as concentrated in the cross and resurrection. It is the gestalt of Jesus Christ which reveals the persons and personal relations of the Trinity. In Jesus' reference to his Father on the one hand and to the Spirit on the other we see the reality of what would later be called Trinity. The Father to whom Jesus points is his origin, precisely as the one who sends him. This Father is different from the Son who is sent. He is also different from the Spirit, whom Jesus promises to send to his disciples once he has returned to his Father.

Aber eine solche Unterscheidung Mehrerer in Gott wird christlich nur vom Verhalten Jesu Christi aus möglich. In ihm allein ist die Trinität geöffnet und zugänglich... Von Vater, Sohn und Geist als "göttliche Personen" wissen wir einzig durch die Gestalt und Verhaltensweise Jesu Christi. 19

Balthasar insists that the gestalt of Jesus Christ only makes sense when one understands it in a trinitarian perspective.²⁰ We shall examine this more closely in the next chapter, but find it necessary

to point it out here in order to make clear that Balthasar's reflections on the immanent Trinity are not mere theoretical speculations. Rather, they are theological meditations on the trinitarian figure of Jesus Christ as it appears in and constitutes salvation history.²¹

In Jesus Christ, God himself appears in the world and gives himself--not some other gift different from himself--as the salvation of humankind. In beginning with the mission of Jesus Christ, Balthasar shows his similarity to a number of theologians who, despite their differences, accept the challenge and concern behind Rahner's thesis.²² Balthasar himself agrees that one can only know of the immanent Trinity and attempt to make statements about it through the economic Trinity, i.e., through our experience of the Trinity as revealed in the economy of salvation. With others, however, he also warns that the economic Trinity may not be simply identified with the immanent Trinity, even though it is correct to say that the economic Trinity, as it appears in the gestalt of Jesus Christ, is the "interpretation" or revelation of the immanent Trinity. When the two are identified, the immanent Trinity tends to be totally absorbed into the economic Trinity, which in turn means that God is swallowed up in a world "process", and only "comes to be" God in his relationship with the world.²³ For Balthasar, the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity are to be understood "without separation" but also "without confusion" to use the christological terms of Chalcedon. Balthasar finds another of Rahner's

formulations more precise: "no adequate distinction can be made between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the economy of salvation".²⁴ In this sense, it is important to keep in mind that Chapter One and Chapter Two of this study must be seen as a whole and read together.

Balthasar emphasizes that the doctrine of the Trinity is the heart of the doctrine of salvation.²⁵ The gestalt of Jesus Christ, his loving obedience unto death, is the revelation of God's saving love, a love "greater than which cannot be conceived". The cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ reveal the final truth about God and the world: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life". (*John 3, 16*) The very heart and "essence" of Christianity lies in the revelation that the eternal, infinite God infinitely loves the finite, human creature. This love is expressed in the fact that God becomes man and dies the death due to sin and so saves me, his beloved "Thou", from eternal death. I am the "Thou" whom God so infinitely loves. I am what I am only because God makes me his "Thou". If this is the ultimate truth of being and if I am neither God nor a necessary complement to God, then according to Balthasar, the conclusion is unavoidable that God "in himself" must already be eternal "I" and "Thou" and the loving union of both. In other words, the mystery of the Trinity is the unconditional, necessary presupposition for the existence of the world, and for the drama of love between God and the world, a drama which fulfills the world innerly

as an "I-Thou" relationship of love.²⁶

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE EVER-GREATER LOVE BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

In the person and ministry of Jesus Christ we see the eternal Word which is the self-expression of the Father as Love. This Word is the expression of God's very self, no mere information about the hidden Godhead. It is not simply an image or symbol, but true self-communication: the "Son born of the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father". The Word in which God expresses himself is his only begotten Son. God is Father precisely as the One, who in utter freedom from all eternity expresses himself in love, in that he gives himself away in the begetting of the Son. Thus the Son as the expression or Word of the Father's begetting love is not merely a statement about this love, but is itself God's begotten love. The Son is the perfect expression of the Father's self as outpouring love. As such, the Son proclaims and witnesses this love insofar as he surrenders himself to this love and acknowledges his true self as the glorification of the loving Father.²⁷

Balthasar explains that the Father is this very generation. One cannot imagine the Father to be separate from his Word, or "above" his Word,

as if the Father were a god who, already content in himself, "decided" at some point to pro-create or reproduce. As Father, God is in his innermost ground a source of flowing, groundless love. He is an infinite fountainhead, which is what it is by virtue of its self-outpouring.²⁸

Denn in der Tat ist der göttliche Vater zwar wohl die unerschöpfliche, ewig fließende Quelle der Gottheit, aber doch so, daß er in seinem väterlichen Zeugungsakt nichts von der Gottheit für sich zurückbehält, das er dem Sohn nicht immer schon überantwortet hätte, weshalb der Sohn, als das vollkommen antwortende Ebenbild des Vaters ebenfalls nichts für sich zurückbehalten kann, das er dem Vater nicht in Danksagung und Bereitschaft zurück anböte.²⁹

Balthasar is careful to point out that this self-outpouring is not to be understood as a necessary, natural emanation, as if God only came to his "self" as absolute Spirit and Freedom in the Son. The groundless self-outpouring of the Father is itself already utterly free and therefore can only be described with the word love.

The true nature of such generation remains a mystery. We see only a faint shadow of it in God's creation of the world, or in the human act of procreation; for in both these examples, the essence and being of the procreator is not identical with the process of procreation. God's "essence" is not apart from this process of generation and of being generated.³⁰

But this "I-Thou" relationship in which God is Father as the Begetter and Son or Word as the Begotten is not simply abstract dialectic. It is total, mutual surrender in love: being for the other. And the fruit of this loving dialogue, in its living unity and miraculous "more", is the Spirit.³¹

Gerade in dieser gegenseitigen Restlosigkeit des Füreinanderseins liegt der Ansatz für den Hervorgang des Geistes... 32

Balthasar asks why in God, the divine love is not perfectly fulfilled in the intimacy between Father and Son. Both are the eternal God, so that each has in the other the infinity of the Godhead to recognize, adore and to love. Why does eternal life begin anew in God in the loving relationship between Father and Son?

This of course was just the same question that Richard of St. Victor raised.³³ Whereas Richard turned to the analogy of friendship, Balthasar finds the self-surrender in married love which brings forth the wonder of new life the best analogy for approaching the unfathomable mystery of the trinitarian love. One must remove the aspects of corporality and temporality--and so the elements of possible repetition and predictability--and see the fruit no longer as separated from its source by nine months, but rather timelessly immediate in the sexual union which brings it about. Then, says Balthasar, the sudden presence of the child in the midst of the most intimate union of the parents appears as a miracle.

The sexual union of man and woman is physically so intimate that there isn't any space or distance between the lovers. And yet, a third person "materializes"--not merely as a stranger--and yet far more than just the "we" of the lovers. The child comes as a pure gift to both of them, which because it is unplanned and unmanipulated, manifests itself as the personal quintessence of love itself.³⁴

The child is born of the love between its parents and is not only the proof of the union in love of its parents, but also the revelation of the self-transcendence of their love. In their child, the parents see the miracle of their love for one another. The unity and intimacy of their complete, mutual self-surrender in love is not exclusive but creative. True love goes beyond itself. It bears fruit, brings forth new life. As the fruit of the act of love between its parents, the child is "one flesh" and blood with them. It bears the features of both. And yet it is no mere "reproduction"--neither a simple summary nor a mixture of its parents. The real miracle of love is that it brings forth life which is new and other, truly an "other".³⁵

For Balthasar, the sexual union is an expression of mutual surrender. It is not so much the physical union which is at the heart of the analogy he suggests, as the total self-surrender in love which the physical union expresses. Where human beings truly abandon themselves in love, they surrender control and make themselves vulnerable. Such love is much more than merely rational, calculable and overseeable. The lovers experience--in their

act of loving surrender--something that goes beyond their own control and expectations. Their love is something "bigger" and "newer" than the two of them, and yet it is not merely an impersonal force or fate. For Balthasar, the miracle of total self-surrender in love is the everlasting surprise that mutual love "contains" far more than the lovers could ever imagine.³⁶

In an analogous way, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, both as the personal unity of their mutual self-surrender in love and as the miracle of the eternal fruitfulness of this love in a third person.

God is therefore Spirit both in his divine essence and in person. God is already in his very essence spirit: "absolute self-possession" as "poured out love".³⁷ Beyond this however, God is spirit in person, in the third person of the Trinity. Balthasar sees two main aspects, both of which are illuminated by the analogy of married love which we saw above. First, the Holy Spirit is the unity in person of the loving self-outpouring of the Father, as the source of the divine love, and the loving self-acceptance of the Son, as the image and expression of this love. In this dimension, Balthasar sees the relative truth of traditional Latin trinitarian theology, which understands the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and Son as the bond of their mutual love. As such the Spirit is the expression in person of God's innermost being. Secondly, the Spirit is the third person precisely as the eternal "more", the surprising "newness" and unending "fruitfulness" of this outpouring love.

Here, according to Balthasar, is the relative truth of traditional Greek trinitarian theology, which understands the Holy Spirit as being poured out from the Father through the Son into infinity. In this perspective, the Holy Spirit is also the expression in person of God's outermost being, the *ekstasis* of the divine love, the possibility and the reality of God's going outside himself in love.³⁸

So hat die personale Einheit nochmals zwei Aspekte, vergleichbar mit der Stellung des Sohnes zum Vater: sie ist einerseits das vollendete, rundende Zueinander von Vater und Sohn--und hier geht der Geist mehr im lateinischen Sinn von Vater und Sohn gleichzeitig aus in ihrer gegenseitigen Zuwendung; sie ist andererseits die letzte Öffnung Gottes in sein eigenes, vollkommenes Außen, worin der Heilige Geist als Person objektivierte Liebe von Vater und Sohn ist--und hier liegt die relative Wahrheit des griechischen Aspekts, die ihn vom Vater durch den Sohn ausgehen, ins Unendliche verströmen läßt. 39

Without a doubt, the Spirit as the "ever-greater love" between Father and Son is central to Balthasar's notion of God.⁴⁰

Er ist das ihrer Liebe Zukommende, Zufallende, das Je-mehr dessen, was im reinen Ineinandersein erhoffbar schien, das Je-Neuer, Je-Jünger, Je-Fruchtbarer Gottes. 41

It is precisely in the Spirit that the fundamental mystery of God's being is revealed: as absolute being God reveals himself as ever-greater, ever-newer love.⁴² In this sense, the utter mystery who God

is and remains, comes to its fullest expression in the Spirit. Balthasar calls him "*der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes*", the "Unknown one beyond the Word".⁴³

For Balthasar, the absoluteness of God is therefore better expressed as infinite comparative⁴⁴ rather than as superlative, which often indicates a rather static notion of God. God is ever-greater, ever able to "exceed" himself as Father through the Son in the Spirit--not because of any lack or imperfection, but precisely as eternal, inexhaustible, freely self-outpouring fullness.⁴⁵

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE "WE" IN PERSON OF FATHER AND SON

The analogy of the act of love which issues in the free, new gift of life in a child seems to have been particularly helpful in emphasizing God's freedom to be ever-greater, ever-newer, precisely in the person of the Holy Spirit. Balthasar also draws on the work of H. Mühlen⁴⁶, who has developed a trinitarian theology using the personal categories "I-Thou-We" as a way of speaking about the trinitarian relations between Father, Son and Spirit. In this approach, the specific characteristic of the Holy Spirit as "person from and in persons" is stressed. Mühlen distinguishes between two basically different modes of personal relationship. The "I-Thou" relationship is a relationship of dialogue, the opposition of two persons who both address each

other as "Thou", one after the other. The "We" relationship, on the other hand, is characterized by the fact that the two persons in such a relationship do not address each other as "We", but together, referring to themselves in unity, address a third person or object.⁴⁷ As such, the "We" relationship is something new, and not reducible to the oppositional dialogue of the "I-Thou" relationship. This can be seen, as Balthasar points out, in a human relationship, when two persons mutually give themselves to one another in love. Something new happens. They no longer stand in the opposition of an "I-Thou" relationship, but find themselves, and only so can they understand themselves, at an entirely new level as a unified "We". This "We" is not the expression of either one individually, nor merely the sum of both, but rather the unity of their love.

In an analogous way Balthasar, following Mühlen, calls the Holy Spirit the personal "We", beyond the "I-Thou" relationship between Father and Son. He is this "We" as the "product of their union and the fruitful witness of its sovereign freedom".⁴⁸ These two aspects of the Spirit--as "product of the union" of Father and Son, or as its "result" as Balthasar also puts it, and as "fruitful witness of the divine freedom"--were also present in the image of the child born of married love. The child is the result of the act of love of its parents, but as a new person, more a pointer to that love than the reality of that love itself, or even a continuing expression of it. The Holy Spirit, however, is not simply the result of a single act of self-surrender

in love between Father and Son which, as it were, could fade into the past. The Holy Spirit is not simply a pointer, but much more, the very reality, the unity in person, of the love between Father and Son. Unlike the child in relationship to its parents, the Holy Spirit, precisely as the "We" of Father and Son, is solely--but also completely--the reality and expression of the eternal self-surrender in love of Father and Son.

Ist es aber die Eigentümlichkeit (Personalität) des Geistes, Person aus und in Personen zu sein, dann besteht eben seine Wahrheit (seine Liebe) darin, die Wahrheit (die Liebe) dieser anderen Personen zu offenbaren und (als Ergebnis) zu verschenken. Deshalb nimmt er nicht von dem Seinen, sondern "redet, was er hört"... 49

As the "We" of Father and Son, therefore, the personal characteristic of the Holy Spirit is to be nothing except the reality and expression of the infinitely fruitful love between Father and Son. This approach brings out the real paradox of the personal reality of the Spirit. That which constitutes the Spirit's utterly unique, personal identity is his anonymity as the "We" of Father and Son. Balthasar points out that the name "Holy Spirit" already indicates this paradox. The third person of the Trinity doesn't have a proper name. What serves as his "proper name" could be applied to the entire Godhead. God is Spirit.⁵⁰ The Holy Spirit is not the appearance of a "new", "additional" divine love, but the objectivity of the boundlessness of the love between Father and Son.⁵¹

The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the form of the reciprocity of the love between Father and Son as well as the witness thereof.⁵² Balthasar suggests that the Spirit is at once the appearance of the innermost "subjectivity" of the relationship between Father and Son and at the same time the "objectivity" of this relationship, the objective form in which the Father and Son themselves "receive" an expression of and norm for their love. He is a kind of "incentive" for their self-surrender.

Above we saw how the child is both the objective sign and the subjective fruit of the love of the parents. In the present context we might add that once born, the child remains for the parents a living expression of the familial form and of the mutual responsibility of their love. In a similar way, Balthasar compares the Holy Spirit to the marriage vow, which is both the subjective "content" and the objective "form" of the partners' love.⁵³

Thus the Spirit has no identity solely of his own. As Balthasar writes:

Das Eigene des Heiligen Geistes ((ist)) uns immer nur durch das je Eigene des Sohnes und des Vaters erahnbar. 54

The Spirit is the "objectified love of God" not in the sense that it is a comprehensible "object" in itself for the contemplation of the believer⁵⁵, but rather as the structure, form and guarantee of

the love between Father and Son. Balthasar also calls the Spirit a "guardian" or "watchman", a "safe house" and "unbreakable frame", there to protect the divine love which bares itself and reveals its richness precisely in the self-surrendering vulnerability of the lovers. The Spirit is the witness and the guarantor of the eternal reality of such divine love.⁵⁶

The analogical use of personal categories to understand the Holy Spirit as the "We" which arises from the "I-Thou" relationship in love between Father and Son, and the notion of the Holy Spirit as the objective expression in person of this self-surrender in love seem particularly helpful in emphasizing the absolute relatedness of the Spirit to Father and Son. The Spirit as eternal newness in God proceeds from the Father and the Son and can never leave his origin "behind". It is precisely the love between Father and Son which is the source of the boundless, unpredictable freedom of the Spirit. As such, this freedom is just the opposite from arbitrariness.⁵⁷ The identity in the Spirit between the gestalt or structure of God's love and the unfathomable freedom of God's love is a central focus in Balthasar's Christology, ecclesiology and spirituality, as we shall see in the following chapters.

IV. TRINITARIAN PERSONS

All of the examples we have seen seek to shed some

light on the central mystery of Christian faith: that the one God is in himself a communion of love, the union in difference of three persons, Father Son and Spirit. It is clear that to speak of three persons in God is to speak analogously.⁵⁸ The history of the terms used to speak about the trinitarian differentiation is long and complicated. It is beyond the scope of this study to go into it in any detail.⁵⁹ What is it that the term person is supposed to express? Like many other contemporary theologians, Balthasar points out that what most people usually understand when they use or hear the word person is not at all what is meant when one speaks of persons in God.⁶⁰ Balthasar cites F.J. Schierse, who notes that recent dogmatic investigations have shown that the concept of person in the doctrine of the Trinity may not be identified with the usual understanding of person as a self-contained, spiritual act-center.⁶¹ Schierse is referring especially to K. Rahner and H. Mühlen. In particular, says Schierse, to conceive the Holy Spirit as an independent, self-conscious "person" in today's sense of the word would be downright heretical. Quoting H. Mühlen, Schierse holds that what constitutes the divine persons as persons is solely their relative opposition.⁶² Consequently, Schierse finds little help in biblical language--particularly the usage of the fourth Gospel--toward a suitable solution to this problem.

While Balthasar concedes the problem, he strongly disagrees with Schierse's conclusion; namely, that it is theologically irrelevant for trinitarian theology and its concept of person, whether the Spirit is

conceived of as an active, conscious, communicating person in the usual sense, or as an impersonal force. Balthasar agrees that the three divine persons are not three independent act-centers, but rather "three distinct ways of participating in the one, spiritual-personal act-center of the absolute God".⁶³ He insists further that the particular way that each of the persons participates is constitutive of the personhood. Balthasar points to the unique freedom and agency which Paul attributes to the Spirit in the distribution of the charisms in the church as an example which shows the particular personal activity of the third person of the Trinity. A notion of the Spirit as an impersonal force cannot do justice to the biblical witness.

Und gerade die Souveränität freien Verfügens, ja differenzierten Wählens und Vorziehens (etwa in den Verteilungen der verschiedenen Charismen durch den einen und selben Geist 1 Kor 12, 4-11) läßt den Mitbesitz des göttlichen Aktzentrums sehr klar erscheinen. 64

Indeed, for Balthasar, the mystery of the one, "tri-personal" God⁶⁵ appears in its incomprehensibility especially in the third person. Nameless, he is not impersonal. Balthasar's chief concern is to speak of the Spirit in such a way as to express both the utter freedom and creativity which are proper to the Spirit, as well as the absolute relatedness of the Spirit to the Father and Son, from whom the Spirit eternally and irrevocably proceeds.

It seems that for Balthasar, each of the divine

persons is a subject which shares in a uniquely constitutive way in the one divine self-consciousness and freedom. It is not surprising that Balthasar finds Rahner's understanding of the immanent Trinity "oddly formal".⁶⁶ According to Rahner, the divine persons are not to be conceived of as three "subjectivities".⁶⁷ The problem, as W. Kasper notes, is that if the divine hypostases aren't in some sense "subjects" in the immanent Trinity, then they can't appear in the economy of salvation as speaking, active subjects.⁶⁸

For Balthasar, if the divine hypostases aren't in some sense "subjects", they can't very well be in a relationship of love with one another. And yet, the heart of the mystery of the Trinity is precisely the divine revelation and the Christian confession in faith that God is love, not just in his relationship with the world, but in himself, from all eternity. Therefore, although the persons in the Trinity may not be conceived of as three separate centers of consciousness--because in God there is only one, tri-personal, divine being--nonetheless, they are not merely three modalities of the one divine Spirit. They are real "selves" capable of relationship in love.⁶⁹ But the question remains: in what sense "selves"?

Quite unlike Rahner⁷⁰, Balthasar's approach is similar to Mühlen's: the personal categories of "I-Thou-We". Like Mühlen, who was also influenced by Richard of St. Victor, Balthasar tries to develop a relational notion of person for the Trinity

which goes beyond both the substance-conception of person as self-sufficient "being-in-itself" and the subject-conception of person as autonomous, individual "being-for-itself".⁷¹ How does he do this?

Balthasar looks to the gestalt of Jesus Christ.⁷² The personhood and the unique "personality" of Jesus is not something "in and for itself". "Who" Jesus is, is revealed in his relationship to the Father who sends him. His whole personal reality is "defined" by this relationship and his personal existence is not "being-for-self" or "self-possession", but being-for-the-Father and being-for-the-others to whom the Father sends him. Balthasar suggests that this being-for-the-other is not just a characteristic of Jesus as the economic, incarnate Son. It is a fundamental characteristic of personhood in the Trinity itself.

Thus, referring to the personal distinction in the Trinity, we meet expressions like: "pure being-for-one another"⁷³, "pure relations"⁷⁴, the eternal "event of being-into-one another"⁷⁵ or pure "relatedness".⁷⁶

According to Balthasar, the unity of love means being-for-another. The unity of the divine love is precisely "pure being-for-one another". As a possible "definition" of God, he suggests union as mutual being-for-another.⁷⁷ This is exactly what the concept person in trinitarian theology should bring out. To confess that "God is love" means that in God there is "pure-being-for-another.

This notion of person stands in sharp contrast to the modern notion of person, especially after the Enlightenment, with its strong emphasis on individual autonomy. The persons of the Trinity, says Balthasar, are not to be thought of in such a way that each person is primarily a "being-for-itself" or "self-possession" or "self-consciousness", which then only secondarily opens itself to the others. What one might call their "self-consciousness" is what they possess commonly as the one, indivisible God. The point which Balthasar emphasizes again and again, however, is that the unity of the Godhead "integrates" itself precisely in and through the "being-for-another" of the individual persons. Thus the trinitarian persons are not first individuals which then have to be brought into unity somehow.

Unlike western trinitarian theology, Balthasar does not begin with the one, indivisible, divine nature and then try to proceed to the distinction of three persons. Like eastern trinitarian theology, he begins instead with the trinitarian distinction of persons revealed in the economic mission of the Son, and tries to show how an appropriate notion of person allows one to think God's unity necessarily and simultaneously, and not merely as a subsequent unification.

Balthasar also expresses this by saying that in God, person and community are simultaneous. They require and condition each other. In God, community is so intimate that the persons totally penetrate each other. They are "pure communion", so much so that they are "different" from each other only

in order to be for each other:

In Gott also gibt es gleichursprünglich Personalität und Gemeinschaft, eine so innige Gemeinschaft, daß die Personen sich vollkommen durchdringen, reine Communion sind, sich unterscheiden nur, um füreinander zu sein. Das Prinzip des Personalien--die unantastbare Voraussetzung für die totale Communion--schließt vollkommen aus, was man in der Welt der endlichen Wesen das "Private" nennt. 78

In the relative opposition of the persons lies the possibility--indeed the actuality--of total communion. The divine communion is the "perfect transparency"⁷⁹ of the persons, precisely as particular forms of the one, divine love as self-surrender.⁸⁰

In this sense one might say that the essence or nature of God for Balthasar must be conceived from the very start personally and as trinitarian. God is "love as self-surrender", "eternal surrender" or "trinitarian surrender".⁸¹ Personhood in the Trinity means self-surrender: selfhood as selflessness!

Thus it is clear that Balthasar has a very specific kind of "relatedness" in mind when he speaks of the trinitarian persons as relations. Far more than the analogy of the interrelatedness and interdependency of human persons might suggest, the trinitarian persons are "related" precisely in their mutual self-surrender. Paradoxically, Balthasar can speak of the selfless-ness of the persons.⁸²

The trinitarian life lives precisely from this infinite surrender and selflessness, from the absolute priority of the "Thou" over the "I".⁸³ As we shall see later, this has great consequences for Balthasar's understanding of Christian life in the Spirit as communion born of self-sacrificing love. Such self-surrender is rooted in the Trinity itself. We would like to present a longer text, taken from a "Prayer to the Spirit", which perhaps can help us better understand what Balthasar is trying to express.

Du bist Du selbst, indem Du der Selbstlose bist. Die Personen in Dir sind nicht fixe Punkte, sondern schwebende Beziehungen, Formen der Hingabe, keine Festungen, die man erobern müßte, sondern Offenheiten, an denen nur teilgewinnt, wer aus der eigenen Festung preisgebend heraustritt. Die Gesinnung der Liebe, die wir von Dir erbitten, bist Du selbst. Du, Vater, gibst Dein ganzes Gottsein dem Sohn; Du bist Vater nur, indem Du Dich gibst; Du, Sohn empfängst alles vom Vater und willst vor ihm nichts anderes sein als der Empfangende und Zurückgebende, der in liebendem Gehorsam den Vater Darstellende, Verherrlichende; Du, Geist bist die Einheit dieser beiden gegenläufigen Hingaben, ihr Wir als ein neues Ich, das königlich, göttlich sie beide beherrscht--Person gewordene Liebe!--die in beiden nichts anderes wünscht, als von der absoluten Liebe gekrönt zu werden: in der Hingabe jedes eigene Planen und Verfügen zu lassen, um der Liebe an ihrer Statt das Regiment zu übergeben. 84

From this beautiful text, it is clear that the notion of person understood formally as pure being-for-another or pure relatedness, is not applied materially to Father, Son and Spirit in an univocal way. Rather what constitutes the personhood of

each person is precisely that which is specifically characteristic of each in relation to the other two persons.⁸⁵ The particular mode or manner of pure being-for-each-other which constitutes each person is unique to that person. One can understand the Father only in terms of his self-surrendering begetting of the begotten Son. God is Father insofar as he gives himself away. The Son receives everything that he is from the Father, and as the perfect expression of the groundless, self-surrendering love of the Father, wishes to be nothing more than the receiver and glorifying reciprocator in love. For Balthasar, this is the inner-trinitarian ground for the economic revelation of the trinitarian love precisely in the obedience of Christ in his mission-existence. The Spirit is the union, or better, the unexpected, new fruit of the surrender between Father and Son. He, too, surrenders his "self" in love, in his desire to be nothing else but their "We", the expression and communication of their love.⁸⁶

Thus it is clear that for Balthasar, "person" is not only a relational but also an essentially kenotic concept. Before we turn to a consideration of Balthasar's kenotic approach to trinitarian theology, however, it might be helpful to try to situate what we have seen thus far of Balthasar's approach in the history of trinitarian theology.

One can see that Balthasar does not develop a technical, precisely defined concept of person for the Trinity. This is not surprising since, as we pointed out

earlier, Balthasar nowhere attempts to develop systematically the doctrine of the Trinity. He seems rather to take for granted the dogmatic definitions (which, it must be remembered, do not attempt to define precisely the concepts *hypostasis* and *persona* either)⁸⁷ and gleans what seems useful from a number of authors. In situating Balthasar's thought, as we briefly indicated in the introduction to this chapter, one would certainly have to note the dependence upon Augustine⁸⁸ and Thomas. But even more importantly, one will recognize the central influence of Richard of St. Victor's understanding of the Spirit and the relational notion of person which he developed in his *De Trinitate*.⁸⁹

In this connection, one might note that Balthasar, like several other contemporary theologians, aware of the bankruptcy of the approach of Neoscholasticism, has tried to rediscover the insights of High Scholasticism in light of modern personal categories.⁹⁰

Balthasar himself sees Richard as the one who has most influenced his own work. It was Richard who, according to Balthasar, saw that the "psychological" approach of Augustine from the unity of the human spirit in memory, intellect and will as an *imago trinitatis* was insufficient.⁹¹ As we have already seen, Richard began instead with the love relationship between two persons and arrived at an understanding of the Spirit as the third *persona condilecta*. This approach was not entirely new. Even though it would be Augustine's "psychological" approach which would have (primarily through Thomas) the greatest effect upon trinitarian theology in the West,

one cannot overlook the fact that Augustine also knows the approach which begins with the image of love. Already in his tract on the Trinity, Augustine speaks of the Lover, the Beloved and the bond between them, Love itself.⁹² In his commentary on the Gospel of John, he speaks of the love between three friends as a "trace of the Trinity".⁹³ According to Balthasar, Augustine did not develop this approach, since he considered the subsequent danger of a naive tri-theism too great. Richard, too, was clear of the dangers involved in such an approach.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, he carried this approach through, and consistently tried to defend himself against such misunderstandings by insisting in a way formally more radical than Thomas would later on, that the persons distinguish themselves purely in the formality of the processions.⁹⁵

According to Balthasar, Richard's real originality lies in his reflections on the Spirit. He was able to bring out the boundless self-surrender, "newly" born out of the "already" perfect love between Father and Son. The divine love of its very nature tends to go outside itself in the sense that the perfect love between Father and Son bears the unexpected fruit of the "third" in God: the Holy Spirit. The very person of the Spirit continually reminds us that God is beyond our grasp: *"si comprehendis non est Deus"*.⁹⁶

At the risk of over-simplifying, one could say that Augustine's image of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and Son might tend to

emphasize the utter perfection and fulfillment of the divine love in itself. While this is certainly true, Balthasar stresses much more the utter newness of the divine love. Its perfection "in itself" is precisely its overflowing fullness, its unexpected, ever-greater fruitfulness. While such considerations are not entirely foreign to Augustine⁹⁷, Balthasar finds Richard's approach much more sympathetic. Precisely in the emphasis upon the Holy Spirit as the outpouring love of God in its ability to be ever-greater and ever-new, Balthasar's approach is more "eastern" in flavor than Augustine's obviously could be. Here again, Balthasar finds a real strength in Richard: an approach which in a clearly reflected way unifies the genius of both Greek theology, with its starting point in the divine persons, and of Latin theology, with its starting point in the one, divine substance.⁹⁸ This is certainly a great concern of Balthasar's as well. And, one must admire his work which really does draw these two traditions together. It remains an important task to develop more conceptual clarity where possible.

Finally we might suggest that Richard's approach lends itself far more than Augustine's to the personalistic categories of other modern approaches taken up and developed by Balthasar, especially the work of H. Mühlen and D. von Hildebrand in this area.

The real significance and usefulness of Balthasar's "synthesis" will become clearer when seen as part

of his kenotic understanding of God. Such an understanding of the divine relations in the immanent Trinity will provide Balthasar with a trinitarian foundation for his understanding of the creation and Incarnation as kenosis. In what sense does Balthasar speak of kenosis in the immanent Trinity?

V. TRINITARIAN KENOSIS

We have just seen that Balthasar understands the immanent Trinity as that "eternal and absolute self-surrender" which God as absolute love is in himself.⁹⁹ The essence of God is "love as surrender" and the persons of the Trinity are understood as modes or forms of surrender of the one divine love which flows from the Father as fountainhead of the divinity.¹⁰⁰ That God is God precisely insofar as he gives himself away; that divine self-possession is really self-surrender, is really the heart of a kenotic doctrine of God.¹⁰¹

Balthasar goes back to the pre-Pauline hymn as presented by Paul in the *Letter to the Philippians* (2:6-11). According to his interpretation, we have here a text which speaks of self-emptying--not merely of the incarnate Son, but of the divine, transcendent Son in the form of God. The Incarnation and with it, as its inherent goal, the death on the cross is a self-emptying on God's part. Balthasar notes that the theological problems involved in the interpretation of such a text came to the fore in the Christological disputes

of the first centuries. How could one avoid an extreme understanding of the unchangeability of God on the one hand and patripassianism on the other? If one stressed the unchangeability of God, then it was hard to show how in the Incarnation something really new was happening. Stressing the reality of the Incarnation, however, seemed to mean positing a "change" , indeed a "suffering" in God. Anthanasius, Cyril, Leo the Great and Hilary, each in their own way, and in a specific context, all spoke of the Incarnation as a self-emptying, indeed as of a divine self-humiliation. It is not that God "grows", becomes "more", or "gains" something; rather he empties himself. Still, the fundamental problem remained. Balthasar sees in Hilary the first important steps in the right direction. For Hilary, the ability to assume the form of a slave in obedience, even unto death on the cross is precisely a sign of God's sovereign freedom. The form of glory and the form of the slave are both expressions for Hilary of one and the same divine freedom.

Of course, this problem couldn't really be approached in a fruitful manner, and much less "solved", until the development of trinitarian theology. For Balthasar, it is precisely a trinitarian theology which understands the persons as relations of one, eternal self-surrender in love that provides the best approach.¹⁰² Once one understands God, not as "absolute power", but as "absolute love" and God's sovereignty not as an unchangeable self-possession of divine power, but as the utterly free self-surrender and sharing

of freedom, then one can retrieve many of the insights of the Fathers. Balthasar agrees with those Fathers who understood the kenosis of the Incarnation as a self-limitation or self-renunciation on God's part, and saw in it not only an expression of God's incomprehensible freedom, but also, and precisely in the powerlessness of the Crucified One, as an expression of God's incomprehensible power.¹⁰³

More recently, Balthasar finds the insights of Russian theology, particularly the work of S. Bulgakow, extremely important.¹⁰⁴ Balthasar follows Bulgakow, who distinguishes three kenoses of God: an inner-trinitarian kenosis, the Creation and the Incarnation. This inner-trinitarian kenosis is the eternal procession of the Son and the Spirit from the Father. The Father completely expresses himself as self-surrendering love precisely in the act of his eternal emptying of self in the Son. Here the generation of the Son is understood radically as self-surrender,¹⁰⁵ which of course is impossible in the human act of procreation. The Son does not merely share divine life with the Father, as a human child shares human life with its parents. The Son is the divine life of the Father as given away, as eternally poured out. In this sense, Balthasar sees the self-expression of the Father in the generation of the Son as a "first and fundamental kenosis in the immanent Trinity".¹⁰⁶

...da der Vater sich darin restlos seiner Gottheit enteignet und sie dem Sohn übereignet: er "teilt" sie nicht "mit" dem Sohn, sondern "teilt" dem Sohn alles Seine "mit": "Alles Deinige ist mein" (Joh 17, 10). 107

Thus, the kenosis which Paul proclaims of the Son in Philippians: "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself", is also true in an analogous way of the Father. In the love of the Father there lies an absolute "self-denial":

In der Liebe des Vaters liegt ein absoluter Verzicht, für sich allein Gott zu sein, ein Loslassen des Gottseins.¹⁰⁸

But in this self-emptying, in this self-surrender, the Father does not "lose" himself. The Father is this act of surrender.¹⁰⁹ "Only in not holding fast to himself is God Father. He pours out his very substance and generates the Son."¹¹⁰

The kenosis of the Father in the generation of the Son is only one aspect of the trinitarian kenosis as revealed in the "selflessness of the divine persons as pure relations in the inner-trinitarian life of love".¹¹¹ If the essence of God is self-surrender in love¹¹², what specifically constitutes the Son as Son? According to Balthasar, the Son is God precisely in a surrender of self as the refusal to be anything but the self-expression of the Father. The response of the Son to the free self-donation of the divine Father can only be grateful reciprocation: a surrender in love just as selfless and uncalculating as the "original"

surrender of the Father was.¹¹³ In not holding fast to what he has received "for himself", the Son shows himself to be equal in being with the Father.¹¹⁴

The Spirit as the subsisting "We"¹¹⁵ proceeding from Father and Son is, as the third person of the Trinity, not the revelation of a new "self", but the personal unity in love of Father and Son. The Spirit is God insofar as he seals this self-surrender which is identical in Father and Son. He wants to be nothing "in" or "for" himself. He wishes only to be the pure proclamation and bestowal of the love between Father and Son.¹¹⁶ The Spirit is the "expression" and "personification" of the common self-emptying of Father and Son, and the witness that such self-emptying bears ever-new and unending fruit.¹¹⁷

We can see a definite gestalt or form in the divine self-surrender. For Balthasar, the Trinity has a fundamentally hierarchical gestalt, without prejudice to the equality of the divine persons. The Father is greater than the Son, not because he is more powerful, but because he is the source, the ultimate fountainhead of the one divine love, which freely empties itself. One sees the unmistakable Johannine spirit of Balthasar's theology, which, it must be emphasized, has nothing whatsoever to do with subordinationism.¹¹⁸

Balthasar stresses that in this kenotic "self-emptying", the trinitarian persons do not disappear in an undifferentiated identity. On the contrary, they "stand apart" from each other. Balthasar

uses the term *Diastase* to describe the "distance" between the persons in the unity of the Godhead.¹¹⁹ This "distance" is the necessary condition for true communion in love.

We might pause here just for a moment and notice how different Balthasar's position is from modalism. This can be seen in his emphasis upon the trinitarian *Diastase* or as he puts it, the "absolute positivity of differentiation" in the gestalt of the Trinity.¹²⁰ Another interesting expression in this regard is *das Sich-Durchhalten der Differenz*.¹²¹ The unity of the Trinity "holds up" under the mutual opposition of the persons, which is the greatest opposition conceivable.¹²² According to Balthasar, it is the very reality of the eternal, divine love which is at stake. Where everything falls together into a single, undifferentiated identity, there can be no relationship of love. But love requires freedom. And this leads Balthasar to suggest that the freedom of the Trinity, which is grounded in the self-emptying love of the Father, involves a mutual "recognition" and "respect" of the personal freedom of each of the persons. Balthasar speaks of "infinite realms of freedom" proper to each of the persons, which prevent the tri-personal structure of the Trinity from collapsing into a totally compressed, lifeless identity.¹²³

Der Akt des väterlichen Sichgebens fordert seinen eigenen Freiheitsraum, der Akt des Sichempfangens und -verdankens des Sohnes den seinen, der Akt

des Hervorgangs des Geistes, der die innigste Liebe beider ins Licht hebt, bezeugt und entfacht, nochmals den seinen. Der Austausch kann noch so innig sein, er fordert das Sich-Durchhalten der Differenz. Den Akten der sich austauschenden Liebe muß so etwas wie unendliche "Dauer" und unendlicher "Raum" gewährt werden, damit das Leben der *communio*, der Gegenseitigkeit sich entfalten kann. 124

These realms of freedom are constituted both by the self-surrender or self-donation of the persons and by a corresponding "recognition" and "respect" of each person for the freedom of the other two. None of the persons wishes to be the other two. This is not a kind of retreat or resignation, but the "positive gestalt of infinite love".¹²⁵

For Balthasar, then, it is clear that the inner-trinitarian kenosis presupposes and preserves a definite, hierarchical structure.

It is precisely the kenotic structure of the trinitarian love which reveals the unfathomable power of God's freedom. In the Father's ability to share his freedom with the Son and Spirit without reserve in eternal self-emptying, God manifests the absolute power of his freedom, beyond all human opposition of power and powerlessness, as the identity of possessing and surrendering.¹²⁶

...so unterschied sich das Christliche dadurch, daß der Gott, dem Raum gegeben wird, selbst schon

ein raumgebender ist: als Gott Vater, der dem Sohn Raum in Gott gewährt, als Gott Sohn, der sich als das Raumgewähren des Vaters versteht und deshalb dem Vater allen Raum in sich freigibt ("meine Speise ist, den Willen dessen zu tun, der mich gesandt hat"), als Geist, der erweist, daß dieses gegenseitige Raumgewähren die innerste Göttlichkeit Gottes ist: eben dieser Vollzug von Freigabe und Gewährenlassen ist das höchste Vermögen, die absolute Macht, aber Macht der sich hingebenden Liebe. 127

If God's "innermost divinity" consists precisely in this eternal "making room for the other" in order to surrender itself in love, then one can understand the inner-trinitarian "*Ur-Kenose*" as the condition for the possibility of the subsequent kenosis of God in the creation of the world, and with it, the creation of human freedom as a sharing in God's own freedom. It is the condition for the possibility, ultimately, of the kenosis of God in the Incarnation of the Son in the drama of redemption.¹²⁸ Here it will become clear why Balthasar stresses the fact that in the trinitarian "*Ur-Kenose*" the real difference of persons (with the corresponding "realms of freedom") is preserved in the unity of the Godhead. For Balthasar, only a trinitarian-kenotic understanding of God (real difference in the union of self-emptying love) can serve as the basis for a positive understanding of the finite world and human freedom in their infinite difference from God.¹²⁹ We shall treat of this more closely at the beginning of the next chapter.

In the trinitarian God, *Diastase* or *Trennung*

or *Differenz* isn't tragic alienation but rather the very condition and form of the union of love which seeks not itself, but makes "room" for and surrenders itself to the other. In the trinitarian God, the opposition between self-possession and self-surrender, between wealth and poverty, between power and powerlessness, between freedom and obedience is overcome. Only such a God can, as the infinite Absolute, nonetheless make "room" for a world with a genuine history of its own, for other finite "persons" with a real share in his own infinite freedom, and so enter into a living, genuinely dramatic relationship of self-surrendering love with his creation.

SUMMARY

Thus far we have drawn on a number of works in order to indicate the main contours of Balthasar's understanding of the immanent Trinity, with a special focus on the Holy Spirit. As we indicated earlier, Balthasar himself is quite aware of the fragmentary nature of his reflections in this area and admits that important aspects may be missing. He has never developed a systematic doctrine of the Trinity, and in the introductions to both *Spiritus Creator* (1967) and *Pneuma und Institution* (1974), expressed his abiding reserve and distrust with respect to such an endeavor. God dwells in unapproachable light, and the splendor of the mystery of the Trinity is too much for our eyes. We can see something of this central light

in its "economic" reflections. But to think that one could arrive at the whole of the mystery from these fragments, to think that from the small "stones" a complete "mosaic" could be construed, is a mistake. God remains mystery.¹³⁰ He is ever-greater: not only in relation to our knowledge of him but also already in himself! At the heart of Balthasar's mistrust of "system" lies a keen sensitivity for the utter mystery of the divine love.¹³¹

Once one realizes this, it is immediately evident that such an attitude toward mystery and conceptualization by no means excludes the attempt to reflect upon and speak about God's revelation in an orderly and "systematic" way. The goal is not to try to grasp or comprehend God by placing him within some conceptual framework but rather to try, with the help of concepts which always remain only partially adequate because of the analogical character of all reflection on God, to appreciate more the relationship between the various aspects of the mystery of God's self-revelation.

By way of summary, we now propose to gather together what we have found specifically about the third person of the Trinity, and to indicate the aspects which seem especially important in Balthasar's thought. Balthasar speaks of a "dialectic of the Spirit": on the one hand, the "anonymous", "we-character" of the Spirit, and on the other hand, the "sovereign freedom" proper to the Spirit.¹³²

These seem to be appropriate categories with which to summarize the results of our investigation thusfar.

For Balthasar, the Holy Spirit is the sovereign freedom of God in person.¹³³ When he speaks of the Spirit in the immanent Trinity as the ultimate freedom of God¹³⁴, it is generally to emphasize two things. First, God is in himself absolute freedom and love. He does not need to "go outside" of himself in a relationship with a created world in order to "come to himself" as Spirit or in order to (be) love. Secondly, the love and freedom which God is in himself, knows no bounds. Balthasar's favorite image for the "eternal fruitfulness" of God, his freedom to be ever-greater even "within" the Trinity, is the miracle of new life as the fruit of married love. The Spirit is the incomprehensible, unsuspected, creative newness in God. The unbounded "more" which proceeds like a miracle from the union of Father and Son.¹³⁵ If God as absolute Being is love, then the Spirit, precisely as the eternal fruitfulness of this love, is witness to the fact that the divine love as absolute is in itself absolutely inexhaustible, eternally new.

Liebe im Absoluten ist das ewige Wunder, das sich selber in Ewigkeit Wunder bleibt, weil es logisch unfasslich ist, daß der Liebe immerfort dieses Unsägliche entsteigt, daß sie immer noch höher hinausblüht über das, was zwischen Liebenden schon das Äußerste an Erfüllung schien, und daß wiederum die Liebenden von der Unverhofftheit ihrer Kraft, ihrer Leistung, ihrer innern Belohnung und Bekrönung zu neuen Spielen und Erfindungen angestachelt werden. 136

On the other hand, Balthasar often refers to what he calls the "anonymity of the Spirit".¹³⁷ In using this term, Balthasar stresses the unique relatedness of the third person of the Trinity to the Father and Son. The incomparable, immediate characteristic of the Spirit's "personality" is to be the "person from and in persons" of the Trinity.¹³⁸ The Spirit is the "We" of Father and Son. The Spirit is the "last" of the trinitarian persons, in the sense that the Spirit proceeds from the begetting Father and the begotten Son as the identity-in-difference of their love, and is therefore determined by the relationship between Father and Son.¹³⁹ Balthasar calls the Spirit the "last determinateness of God".¹⁴⁰ Although it sounds paradoxical, this is another way of speaking of the Spirit's anonymous character. Metaphorically, one might say that the Spirit is faceless. The "face" of the Spirit could reveal nothing else but the loving Father and Son, since the Spirit is completely "determined" by this love. The Spirit is this love.¹⁴¹ In this sense, Balthasar frequently speaks of the Spirit as the result, product, concentration or even objectification of the love between Father and Son.¹⁴²

This aspect of the Spirit's uniqueness will be extremely important for Balthasar's reflections on the role of the Spirit in the life of Jesus and in the on-going economy of salvation. In utter freedom, in surprisingly new and sometimes disturbingly critical ways, the Spirit is not a "new" self-revelation of God, but witnesses to

the unique, "once and for all" revelation of the love of God which has appeared in the world in the gestalt of Jesus Christ.¹⁴³ We shall have to keep this dialectic of the Spirit in mind when we later turn to the question of the relationship between the church born of the Spirit of Christ, and the other world religions.

The Spirit, in the unity of these two aspects-- utter freedom and enduring determinateness, is the objective witness both of the infinite surplus of God's overflowing life and of the definite gestalt or form, of the fullness of order and structure in God. The Spirit is the witness to God's ability to express himself, to share himself, both within the Trinity and in the economy of God's self-revelation.¹⁴⁴

Balthasar calls the Spirit the "total boundlessness" of God, the ultimate "opening" in God "outside" of himself.¹⁴⁵

Im Ansichtigwerden ihrer personifizierten Liebe als Frucht und Gabe im Heiligen Geist erscheint die Liebe zwischen Vater und Sohn nicht nur über sich hinaus *vollendet*, sondern auch über sich hinaus *geöffnet*, jeder Exklusivität entbunden; ihre von Anfang an "gemeinte" Entschränkung, die sich einstweilen nur zwischen zwei Bestimmten auswirken konnte, wird im Geist zu Entschränkung-überhaupt. Auch in dieser Hinsicht ist der Geist der Inbegriff der Mitteilung Gottes "nach außen". 146

The Spirit is the personal reality of God's freedom to be himself precisely in the Father's complete self-surrender to and in another, the Son, who

himself is "nothing" except--but completely so--the surrendered "self" of the loving Father, and so, one with the Father in divinity. Absolute freedom, considered in the kenotic, trinitarian way, is in the Spirit, of its very essence, sharing and shared freedom.

According to Balthasar, this is where we are to look if we wish to understand better the mystery of the creation of finite freedom. In the Spirit as the personal unity of the sharing and shared freedom of God, God is capable of sharing his freedom "outside" of himself as well: in creation and Incarnation. In so doing, he is able to enter into a genuine relationship with the world, in which he draws the world to its true fulfillment "into himself" in a union of love. This brings us to the next chapter of this study: Jesus and the Spirit: Creation and Incarnation.

CHAPTER TWO: JESUS AND THE SPIRIT--CREATION AND INCARNATION

I. THE CREATION OF THE WORLD OF FINITE FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we saw how Balthasar understands the immanent Trinity: absolute love as self-surrender.¹ This kenotic approach also led to an understanding of infinite freedom (which God is in himself as absolute Spirit) as *Sein-Lassen* and *Raumgeben*.² The Father is God as the One who without reserve pours himself out in utterly free love. He does not need to seek himself in another, nor does he "hold onto" anything for himself. This divine, gratuitous selflessness is the generation of the Son, who is God as the One who, with neither reserve nor with demand, receives all that he is from the Father. The Spirit, as the personal unity of Father and Son, is the One who personifies the ever-greater fruitfulness and freedom of this kenotic love. The Spirit is the witness that the God who freely gives himself away in self-surrendering love does not lose himself.³

At the end of the last chapter, we noted that the Spirit, both immanently and economically, is God in his ability to give himself away and still remain God. For Balthasar, the possibility of the world of finite freedom, and the real drama of the confrontation between divine and human freedom exists precisely because of the *Urdrama* of the kenotic, trinitarian love. This means ultimately that the world of human freedom finds its possibility and its real "home" in the realm of

the Spirit.

Vielmehr ist zu sagen, daß mit der "Entleerung" des väterlichen Herzens beim Hervorbringen des Sohnes jedes mögliche Drama zwischen Gott und einer Welt immer schon miteinbeschlossen und überholt ist, da jede Welt nur innerhalb der vom Heiligen Geist sowohl offengehaltenen wie überbrückten Differenz von Vater und Sohn ihren Ort haben kann. ⁴

This brings us to the theme of the present chapter. First, we shall show how Balthasar understands the creation of free, finite spirit and the world of finite freedom from a specifically trinitarian, kenotic perspective. Secondly, we shall look at the economic role of the Holy Spirit in the kenosis of the Incarnation: the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ.

A. CREATION AS KENOSIS

Following Bulgakow⁵, Balthasar speaks of the creation as a new kenosis of God. In creating the world of human freedom, God does not "hold onto" his own absolute freedom, but gives humanity a real share in it. In so doing, God binds himself to a certain extent, insofar as he limits himself implicitly in the creation and then explicitly in the Covenant. Balthasar considers this free, self-limitation of God a real kenosis, or self-emptying of God in his freedom, precisely

because he creates human beings to have a share in his own divine freedom, and so to participate in his own divine autonomy.

Man kann die Scöpfung, in der Gott sich eine echte geschöpfliche Freiheit gegenüberstellt... eine neue "Kenose" Gottes nennen...durch Mitteilung einer Freiheit, die sich aus nichts anderem als aus sich selbst der göttlichen entgegenstellen kann. ...so partizipiert menschliche Freiheit in ihrem Ja wie in ihrem Nein an der göttlichen Autonomie. 6

We wish now to examine Balthasar's understanding of human freedom and its relationship to God's freedom, since it plays an important role in his Christology, ecclesiology and spirituality. We shall see how for Balthasar, the question of human freedom and its relationship to God can only be approached from a trinitarian context.

Our main source will be Balthasar's latest major work, *Theodramatik*, the second part of his projected trilogy. Here, the focus is the real drama which takes place in Christ between God and the world, and the dramatic confrontation between divine freedom and human freedom which ensues. Balthasar devotes a large part of the first half of the second volume, *Der Mensch in Gott*, to a consideration of infinite and finite freedom.⁷ It is impossible to present the material in all its detail. We shall have to be content with a few highlights.⁸

Balthasar's starting point is the biblical

revelation of the togetherness or interrelatedness of finite and infinite freedom. He speaks of the "*Miteinander beider Freiheiten*".⁹

Rooted in the biblical witness and so in the dramatic confrontation between divine and human freedom in the created world, christian theology must, according to Balthasar, meet all philosophical notions of God and man, of infinite and finite freedom, with its own particular, inalienable two-fold postulate: first, the absolute freedom of God; and secondly, God's power to share his own absolute freedom through the creation of finite beings.¹⁰

A merely philosophical-anthropological approach is not adequate, according to Balthasar, to the full dimensions of human freedom as shown in revelation. By the same token, a theological approach which begins with the divine nature in itself, separated from a theology of the Incarnation, and the trinitarian-personal understanding of God which it presupposes, is adequate neither to the full dimension of God's freedom nor to the true relationship between divine and human freedom. For Balthasar, the only acceptable approach is christological-trinitarian. It is precisely the event of Christ that the nature of human and divine freedom comes to light in their "dramatic encounter".¹¹ From this specifically Christological-trinitarian "postulate", Balthasar raises the philosophical question concerning the nature of divine freedom and human freedom as the condition for the possibility of such drama, a question which

Balthasar sees as legitimate and necessary.¹²

Having made it clear that he begins his investigations from the postulate of the togetherness of divine and human freedom, Balthasar raises the question as to which should be treated first. To treat of God's freedom, which in itself, but not to us, is the most evident, would bring the formal advantage of treating of the condition for the possibility of the existence of finite freedom before treating of its actuality. To treat of human freedom first would bring the advantage of considering precisely the only freedom which we directly experience, and then seeing how the very structure of finite freedom "requires" the existence of absolute--and, according to christian revelation--trinitarian freedom as its ground. He proceeds by first treating of finite freedom as we experience it, with constant reference to the biblical postulate of the irreducible togetherness of both.¹³

B. FINITE FREEDOM

Referring to Augustine, Thomas and Descartes, Balthasar begins his treatment of finite freedom with a preliminary philosophical consideration of human self-consciousness (*Cogito-sum*) as the experience of the fundamental paradox of being. In the experience of self-presence, I know not only that I am a being, but that in this very experience of knowing, I am open to being as such.

This is the paradoxical experience of my own utter incommunicability as a self and of the unlimited communicability of being as such.

Die eine, identische Seinserfahrung enthüllt gleichzeitig beides: die restlose Inkommunikabilität (bzw. Einmaligkeit) und die ebenso restlose Kommunikabilität des Seins... 14

I have the experience that as a self, I am not merely a random piece of the whole cosmos, but unique. But insofar as I experience and ascribe this uniqueness to my "self", I must be ready to acknowledge the uniqueness of unlimited other "selves".

...ich bin dieser Einmalige, aber nur, indem ich unzählbaren Andern den Raum, einmalig zu sein, freigebe. Nicht aus Großmut, sondern weil das Licht des Seins in der Selbsterkenntnis mich dergestalt einschränkt, und ich ohne diese Einschränkung mich selbst nicht erkennte... Ich kann in der ersten Erfahrung meiner selbst zwar unterscheiden, aber nicht scheiden zwischen meiner "Weise zu sein" ... und meiner Ergreifung des Seins als des Allgemeinen. 15

The essentially interpersonal nature of freedom is thus manifested in the very experience of self-consciousness of finite spirit. Freedom as self-possession, both as self-understanding and as self-affirmation, is only possible insofar as I go outside of myself in the recognition and affirmation of other selves.

Der ursprüngliche und sichere Selbstbesitz ist aber keine Selbstintuition oder Wesenserfassung, sie artikuliert sich nur *mit* der universalen Öffnung zu allem Seienden, im Ausgang aus sich selbst zum Erkennen und Wollen von anderem, insbesondere im Mitsein, wobei doch die ursprüngliche Öffnung stets so groß ist, daß kein Seiendes (das nie das ganze Sein ist) sie auszufüllen vermag. 16

Freedom as self-possession is something which must be actualized by going outside of one's self! For Balthasar, two poles, therefore, characterize finite freedom. The first is freedom as self-possession, the ability to be "of oneself", to be "for oneself", to be able to determine oneself, the power to be self-active. From the many terms which Balthasar uses to describe this pole, we can note *Selbstbesitz*.¹⁷ The other pole of finite freedom is the necessity of self-"reception": the fact that the finite self must go outside of itself in order to be a self, that finite freedom must actualize itself through concrete decisions which involve other beings. From the many terms which Balthasar uses to describe this pole, we can note *Sich-Empfangen*.¹⁸ Balthasar also calls these poles "real autonomy" and the "necessity of explicit indebtedness": *echte Autonomie und Notwendigkeit ausdrücklicher Verdankung*.¹⁹ These two poles cannot be separated from each other nor reduced one to the other.²⁰

Thus human freedom is experienced from the very beginning as underway.²¹ Freedom as self-possession

is imperfect and limited, but open to fulfillment. It is precisely in the decisions in the interpersonal realm and in the use of the material goods of the world that human freedom must exercise and actualize itself. This of course raises the question as to the degree of self-actualization possible, the concrete way the free self chooses to actualize itself, and where, ultimately, true freedom is.²²

To be sure, the necessity to go outside of oneself is an indication of finitude, but it also implies a kind of dynamic transcendence, precisely as radical openness to other free beings and to being as such. In this openness lies a kind of absoluteness: "an infinite finitude".²³ However, of itself, finite freedom remains "thrown": it is neither its own source, nor is it able through all its decisions and relationships with other finite beings to achieve the absolute to which it is open and for which it strives in this openness.

Balthasar then follows the problem of the actualization of finite freedom in its irreducible bi-polar structure from the Fathers through to Thomas, in whom he sees a coming together of the theological approaches of East and West. Indeed, it is clear that Balthasar's own thought here is dominated by Thomas. Balthasar shows, referring especially to Irenaeus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Maximus Confessor, Thomas and Pico della Mirandola, that the first pole of finite freedom, genuine self-possession and

and "autonomy", was never seen as an absolute in itself, but always considered within the realm of the infinite freedom of God, within which it must actualize itself. The fact that finite freedom is radically different from infinite freedom, and yet just as radically open to and directed toward infinite freedom as its ground and fulfillment, is expressed in the patristic *theologoumenon* taken from Genesis that man is created in the image and likeness of God.²⁴

In analogy to the experience in the realm of interpersonal relationships between finite free beings, that I cannot force my way into the free interior of another, but must wait for the other to freely open itself in its inner spiritual reality, Balthasar considers the question as to the fulfillment of finite freedom in infinite freedom. This appears possible only if infinite freedom freely opens itself up to finite freedom and therefore makes possible the fulfillment of finite freedom in infinite freedom.

...ein Verhältnis zwischen endlicher und unendlicher Freiheit ((ist)) im letzten gar nicht anders auflösbar...als unter der Annahme einer Selbsterschließung der unendlichen Freiheit... Die kruziale Frage wird nun lauten, ob und wie-- falls solche Selbsterschließung sich ereignet-- endliche Freiheit sich in der unendlichen erfüllen kann, ohne daß das Ausgangsdatum in Frage gestellt, aber auch ohne daß die unendliche Freiheit in irgendeiner Weise verendlicht, zu einem Seienden unter anderen depotenziert wird. 25

How could infinite freedom indwell finite freedom so as to let it be truly free? With the notion of indwelling, Balthasar again follows Thomas, and reflects on the primary experience of self-knowing as knowing being as such (*Urakt der Selbst- als Seinerkenntnis*) where the unity of being and knowing is evident.²⁶ Self-consciousness includes the consciousness not only of other individual beings, but also of being as such. Being is experienced as true and good, and all beings, experienced as participating in being as such, are recognized as true and good. In this experience, the bi-polar structure of the act of self-consciousness (as consciousness of self and consciousness of being as such) remains irreducible. Self-consciousness participates in being but is not identical with it.²⁷

Insofar as the individual consciousness recognizes and affirms being as such in its own act of consciousness as self-consciousness, it also recognizes and affirms other finite consciousnesses precisely as other: as individual, unique self-consciousnesses. With respect to freedom this means: the recognition and affirmation of one's own freedom necessarily means the recognition and affirmation of the freedom of other self-consciousnesses precisely in their incommunicable otherness.

Als Wirkliches ist das Seiende für mich gut, weil es meine Partikularität ergänzt, als Wirkliches kann ich es aber nicht in mir absorbieren, weil ich ihm seine Eigenwirklichkeit lassen muß, damit es allererst gut betrachtet werden kann. 28

But this consciousness of self as the recognition and affirmation of finite freedom as self-possession is at the same time conscious, affirmative participation in being as such, precisely as the ground of self-conscious finite freedom. The self-luminosity of finite spirit in which the luminosity of being as such is experienced points to the inner participation of finite spirit in being as such.

...der Selbstbesitz der geistigen Seele, ihr Urteilen und ihr Streben sind die transzendentalen Modi des alles durchwaltenden Seins selbst: dieses *wohnt* der Seele, die sich selbst in Freiheit erkennt und umfängt, *ein*. Geistsein ist eine höchste Form der Teilhabe am Sein im Ganzen. 29

Nonetheless, notes Balthasar, the implicit experience of being as such in the subject's self-consciousness as the ground of its freedom (truth and goodness), does not settle the question as to whether being as such is thereby revealed as "subjectivity", as personal reality. In other words, in the experience of self-consciousness as experience of being as such, the finite spirit in its particularity can recognize and affirm its own finite freedom only as participation in the whole (being as such). The question remains open whether being as such (as the ground of finite freedom) is itself infinite freedom, in some sense as "subject". In this case, this participation could then be seen as dramatic confrontation in which finite freedom finds the

possibility of personal fulfillment in a personal, absolute and creative ground, i.e., God. Here is where, for Balthasar, philosophical reflection reaches its limits.

Sie ((Philosophie)) müßte folgerichtig das Sich-Auszeugen des nicht-endlichen Seins in endliche Subjekte einer Subjekthaftigkeit des Seins-im-Ganzen zuschreiben können, was doch wieder seiner "Formalität" und Nichtzentriertheit zu widersprechen scheint. Darum bleibt philosophisch die Frage nach dem Woher eine solche, die zwar gestellt werden muß...die aber nicht mit Gewißheit beantwortet werden kann--es sei denn, im Sein erschließe sich von sich selbst her eine dem Sein-im-Ganzen koextensive, nicht partizipative Subjektivität mit unendlicher Vernunft, unendlichem Wollen, unendlicher Freiheit. 30

According to Balthasar then, the philosophical question (which is essentially the transcendental question regarding the existence of a personal infinite freedom as the condition for the possibility of personal finite freedom) cannot be answered with certainty apart from the free self-revelation of such an infinite freedom. Here is where theology, by virtue of God's self-revelation, goes beyond the limits of philosophy. The biblical revelation of the "togetherness" of infinite and finite freedom, the specific "postulate" of theology, claims that finite freedom as *Selbstbesitz*, *Aus-sich-sein-können*, does not alienate itself, but is fulfilled in its acknowledgment of the infinite freedom which reveals itself as the ground of its existence.

God reveals himself in infinite freedom as the ground and the fulfillment of finite freedom. Put the other way around, real finite freedom can ultimately be conceived only as participation in God's freedom, a participation which is wholly gratuitous and which preserves the real difference between the two.³¹ For Balthasar, the possibility of such analogous participation lies in the inner-trinitarian difference between Father and Son in the union of the Spirit. Therefore, we now wish to turn our attention to his discussion of infinite freedom.

C. INFINITE FREEDOM

As Balthasar moves from his treatment of finite freedom to a discussion of infinite freedom, the emphasis becomes increasingly theological. The starting point is the revelation witnessed to in the New Testament.

Unendliche Freiheit im Sinne personalen Verfügens hat ihren Ausgang erst im Neuen Testament. Vieles bereitet sie vor, sowohl in der Philosophie wie im Alten Testament, aber die Sinnfragmente schließen sich nicht zum Ganzen. 32

According to Balthasar, the notion of the Absolute as infinite freedom tended in the Greek world either to remain bound within inadequate anthropomorphic personal categories (as in the religious myths) or to be understood in primarily

impersonal or transpersonal categories (as in the great philosophical traditions). In the Old Testament, God reveals himself as the absolutely free, infinitely powerful One who liberates Israel. But while the absolute freedom of Jahwe, who created heaven and earth, completely permeates his creation, man whom he created "in his likeness" actually has no real access, no inner share in this liberating freedom. He is "fallen". The missing reciprocity appears in Jesus Christ, in whom God shows the real dimensions of his freedom: the freedom to enter into the finitude of his creation, not merely from "outside" and "above" as the all-powerful One, but from "within" and to the very depths, in the cross and resurrection of Christ. In him, human freedom finds access to the divine, both its source and the only real possibility of its fulfillment.³³

The final ground of being is not merely the impersonal or transpersonal necessary "condition" for the possibility of finite freedom. God reveals himself as utterly personal freedom. This absolute freedom is just the opposite from arbitrariness. The truth of God's freedom is precisely his faithfulness. Ultimately it is only because of this interpersonal reliability of God that the finite creature is assured of a trustworthy outlook on the world and can have a confident basis for his action in the world.

Die einzige sichernde Verankerung für die in der Freiheit schwebende Kreatur liegt nunmehr objektiv in Gottes Wahrhaftigkeit, subjektiv

in der eigenen Vertrauenshaltung, die sich aber nicht durch Selbstreflexion der objektiven Wahrheit versichern kann, sondern sich dieser als einer frei angebotenen Überantworten muß. 34

It is precisely the revelation of the faithfulness of God as the absolute, and absolutely trustworthy ground for finite freedom, which brings about a total transformation of the human experience of finitude. The christian knows himself as created and loved precisely in his finitude. Finitude is no longer experienced simply as something negative, as opposed to absolute being. Positively, the finite world is created and affirmed by God as "very good", capable by virtue of its difference from God of being fulfilled in a relationship of love with God.

Die Umwertung vom natürlichen Gefühl der Endlichkeit zum christlichen Kreaturbewußtsein ist damit eine totale... "Es gibt" nichts, was nicht "er ((Gott)) gibt", auch und gerade die endliche Freiheit als solche. Sofern diese--wie alles Geschaffene--aus der unendlichen Freiheit stammt und von ihr freigegeben ist, wird sie bis zuletzt in ihrer Endlichkeit gewollt und bejaht und muß sich in aller Selbstunsicherheit an dieses ihr zugesprochene Ja halten. 35

According to Balthasar, the specifically Christian experience of creaturehood, the positivity of the irreducible difference between God and the world of finite freedom, and ultimately the possibility of real union (in unconfused difference) between God and the world, are grounded precisely in the

inner-trinitarian union-in-difference of Father and Son in the Spirit. Balthasar hopes to find here an answer to the otherwise unanswerable philosophical questions why and how, apart from absolute being (freedom), there is finite being (freedom) at all. His kenotic understanding of the Trinity, which we saw in the last chapter, provides the key.³⁶

God is not only essentially free in his "self-possession". He is also absolutely free precisely in his ability to possess himself by giving himself away in self-surrender. God reveals his own inner-trinitarian freedom (self-possession) as self-surrender.

Auch hier stehen wir jenseits von Notwendigkeit und Zufall: daß die absolute Freiheit des Selbstbesitzes sich ihrem absoluten Wesen gemäß als ein grenzenloses Schenken versteht, dazu wird sie durch nichts als sich selbst bestimmt, aber doch so bestimmt, daß sie ohne dieses Schenken gar nicht sie selbst wäre. 37

The Father is no less divine for giving himself away in love in the Son, and with the Son, in the Spirit. The Son and the Spirit are no less divine because they receive their "selves" from the Father from all eternity. To put it in other words, the mystery of trinitarian freedom is that the Father can and does share his absolute freedom--in the Son. The freedom of the Son, precisely as shared and received, is his "own" only as the Father's gift. But as the

Father's gift, it is genuinely absolute freedom. The point Balthasar seems to make is that even in the Trinity, true freedom can be a gift. Freedom is not less "free" just because it is received. In fact for Balthasar, the Spirit is the revelation par excellence of the nature of absolute freedom as the unity of a gift, given and received.

...die Identität der gebenden Gabe und der sich-empfangenden und verdankenden Gabe als Gabe schlechthin, die diese selbst nur sein kann, indem sie die unendliche Differenz von Vater und Sohn bezeugt, offenhält, befeuert, um innerhalb der Differenz nicht nur die Voraussetzung, sondern schon die Einigung der nicht überholbaren Liebe zu sein. 38

Important here is the fact that the difference between Father and Son remains in the union of the Spirit. As we saw in the last chapter, absolute freedom precisely as *trinitarische Hingabe* is the eternal, mutual recognition and affirmation by each of the divine persons of the absolute freedom of the other two.³⁹ This "making room" (*Raum-geben*) or "letting-be" (*Sein-lassen*) as Balthasar puts it, belongs to the very essence of God's freedom. Just as the difference of the trinitarian persons is preserved in the unity of the Godhead, so too is the one divine freedom differentiated into three "personal" realms. Balthasar speaks of realms of freedom (*Freiheitsräume*) in which each of the divine persons, although "determined" by the trinitarian unity and its *ordo processionis*, is nonetheless absolutely free and sovereign.⁴⁰ In an analogous

way, according to Balthasar, God can allow finite freedom to exist, and make room for it, so that even as a participation in absolute freedom, and so in some sense one with it, the radical difference between the two--and so a real realm of relative independence for finite freedom--is preserved. In this sense, we saw how Balthasar speaks of the creation as a second kenosis analogous to the inner-trinitarian self-emptying of the Father. The positive nature of finite freedom precisely as not absolute is thus grounded in the positive nature of the inner-trinitarian difference of persons. At the same time it is possible to suggest how finite freedom as finite could be called to its fulfillment in infinite freedom.

...wenn in Gott durch die Opposition der Personen das "Nicht" einen unendlichen positiven Sinn besitzt ("der Sohn ist nicht der Vater" usf.), wenn außerdem das "Nichtfesthalten" am eigenen Gottsein, sondern es weggeben...zur absoluten Positivität des Gottlebens gehört, dann braucht der Übergang von der unendlichen Freiheit zur Erschaffung endlicher Freiheiten (mitsamt allem, was diese voraussetzen und fordern) nicht das "absolute Paradox" des Denkens zu sein... 41

D. THE ANALOGY OF FREEDOM

We mentioned above that for Balthasar, following Bulgakow, the creation of the world of finite freedom is seen as a kind of second kenosis in which God shares his freedom. Perhaps we are

now in a better position to understand what he means. Balthasar speaks of the creation as a reflection (*Widerschein*)⁴², continuation (*Fortsetzung*)⁴³ or consequence (*Folgerung*)⁴⁴ of the eternal, inner-trinitarian kenosis. Indeed, the inner-trinitarian mystery of the identity of self-possession and self-surrender is the heart of Balthasar's theology.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, one must be cautious here. While Balthasar understands the finite world of becoming as an image (*Abbild*) of God's inner-trinitarian dynamism (*Urlebendigkeit*), he rejects speaking both of a becoming or a development in God, and therefore, a simple identification of the immanent and economic trinitarian kenoses. In this, he explicitly distances himself from J. Moltmann and the so-called "theology of hope" and from A. N. Whitehead and so-called "process theology".⁴⁶ He stresses that one must clearly distinguish (*eine Zäsur setzen!*) between God's eternal self-affirmation in self-surrender, and his creative affirmation of the world. The world is not God. God does not need the world to be God. The world is not necessary but radically contingent.⁴⁷ God's self-outpouring in the immanent Trinity is utterly free beyond the finite dialectic of freedom and necessity.

In the creation, God brings a contingent world of finite freedom into existence by virtue of his utter freedom. Balthasar wishes to stress the freedom of God's "economic" kenosis in order to make it clear that it is not a kind of necessary neo-platonic or process "overflowing" of the God-head.

Der lebendige Gott verströmt sich nicht naturhaft; aber die Freiheit, in der er das Sein der Welt beschließt, ist dennoch ihrer Natur nach keine andere als die, in der er ewig sein will, was er ist. 48

This text makes it clear, however, that God is God precisely as the one who in utter freedom creates a world. The point is that unlike God, the world --- all finite freedom in the world--- does not have its ground in itself. Its only ground is God's freedom. This remains the irreducible difference between infinite and finite freedom. Thus we see that Balthasar stresses the analogical character of the positivity of finite freedom precisely in its infinite difference from God. The participation of human freedom in divine freedom cannot diminish the radical difference between the two. Balthasar writes:

Das Nicht auf dem Grund der Kreatur--ihr un-aufhebares Nicht-Gott-Sein, Nicht-aus-sich-sein-Können ist selbst keineswegs identisch mit dem innergöttlichen Nicht, aber das letztere bildet den tiefsten Grund dafür, daß das kreatürliche Nicht die Analogie des Seins zwischen Geschöpf und Gott nicht zerbrechen läßt. Die unendliche Distanz zwischen Welt und Gott gründet in der anderen, urbildlichen Distanz zwischen Gott und Gott. 49

Here we see again the clearly trinitarian foundation of Balthasar's understanding of the analogous relationship between finite and infinite freedom. The fact that human freedom is essentially a

received freedom means that its ultimate possibility, reality and fulfillment will be found in the eternal Son. The reason for this is the "position" of the Son in the Trinity itself.⁵⁰ He is the One who from all eternity receives all that he is--his divinity as Son and his eternal, infinite freedom--from the Father. This, according to Balthasar, is the truth of the biblical understanding of the creation of the world "through Christ, in Christ and for Christ".

Aber indem sie ((die Welt und die endliche Freiheit)) sich ganz der göttlichen Freiheit verdankt, kann sie an keinem anderen "Ort" ihre Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit erhalten als im ewigen Sohn, der sein Gottsein ewig der Freigebigkeit des Vaters verdankt. Ist der Sohn das ewige Wort des Vaters, so ist die Welt restlos durch dieses Wort geschaffen (Jo 1, 3), nicht nur wie durch ein Werkzeug, sondern sofern es Urbild und damit Ziel der Welt ist: "durch ihn" heißt ebenfalls "in ihm" und "für ihn" (Kol 1, 16).⁵¹

Balthasar goes on to cite the passages from *Hebrews*, *Ephesians* and *Colossians* which deal with this theme and speaks of Christ as the *causa exemplaris*, *causa finalis* and *causa efficiens* of the world:

...die eine, alles andere umgreifende, ermöglichende und erfüllende "Idee"... Exemplar- und Zielursache, und mitten darin, als der göttliche Sohn, Wirkursache der Welt. ⁵²

In this sense, Balthasar calls Jesus Christ the

concrete universal (*konkrete Universalidee*)⁵³ and the concrete analogy of being (*konkrete Analogia Entis*).⁵⁴ This is not only true of the world in general, but also of each individual freedom in the world. The notion of personal freedom for Balthasar, therefore, is strictly Christological, and insofar as it is through the Spirit that the believer shares in the freedom of the Son, pneumatological. Freedom is participation or communion in the freedom of the Son. In this sense, Balthasar speaks of an *analogia libertatis*⁵⁵ and of the analogy of the freedom of Christ⁵⁶ in relation to each individual finite freedom.⁵⁷

The concrete freedom of the incarnate Son is exemplary for each individual, personal, finite freedom. In Thomistic terms, Balthasar holds that the divine "idea" of each individual, finite freedom is a unique sharing in the uniqueness of the Son. His divinity and infinite freedom makes possible an inexhaustible multiplication (*Vervielfachung*) of ever-unique, individual finite freedoms, each of which is called to fulfill itself in an unique way in the realm of infinite freedom.

Die unendliche hypostatische Sonderheit des Sohnes ist, da sie göttlich-einmalig ist, für jede durch sie fundierte Person das Besondernde. Und je mehr die Person, dem Ruf des Sohnes folgend, auf dieses ihr Urbild im Sohn zuschreitet, desto einmaliger wird sie. 58

Here we see how, beyond the preliminary philosophical

considerations, Balthasar grounds the two-fold character of human freedom (real autonomy and necessary indebtedness)⁵⁹ theologically in the Son as the concrete analogy of freedom. From all eternity, the Son receives the divine freedom from the Father and a real sphere in which he exercises the divine autonomy.⁶⁰ The Son enjoys the divine autonomy "in the mode of reception" (*im Modus des Empfangs*). Balthasar sees this expressed in a passage from *John*: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself" (5, 26). We might say that the Son is absolute freedom precisely as received. The Father is absolute freedom precisely as bestowing (*zeugende Hingabe*).⁶¹ The union of Father and Son in the Spirit is the witness and guarantee that the absolute freedom of Father as bestowing and the absolute freedom of the Son as received are one and the same divine freedom. Thus "autonomy" and "indebtedness" are not mutually exclusive when understood in a trinitarian context. Quite the contrary. In the Spirit they are two aspects (without confusion, without division) of the one divine freedom. These two poles considered as characteristics of finite freedom are analogously grounded in the structure of trinitarian freedom, precisely insofar as human freedom is an image of the divine freedom.⁶²

To speak of human freedom as analogously grounded in the Son (and so, in the Trinity), means not only to speak of its similarity to divine freedom (as "image" of, or participation in divine freedom).

According to the famous statement of Lateran IV⁶³, the even greater dissimilarity between the two must be recognized. Looking at the two poles of autonomy and indebtedness, we could say that the similarity consists in the fact that human freedom is a real participation in the freedom of the Son. Human autonomy is understood by Balthasar as participation in the Son's divine autonomy. Moreover, the indebtedness (*Verdankung, Von-her-Zu-hin, Sich-geschenkt-sein*) of human freedom with respect to divine freedom⁶⁴ is an image of the infinite freedom of the Son as a gift received from the Father.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, an even greater dissimilarity is to be noted between divine and human freedom. The autonomy of human freedom, although real, is radically relative, precisely as participation in the freedom of an Other, the divine Son. The Son, however, does not merely "have" or "participate" in the freedom of the Father. He is this freedom as freely given away.

Thus Balthasar holds that human freedom must be real, and in some sense autonomous, if there is to be a real confrontation in love between God and the world he has created. On the other hand, one cannot conceive of human freedom and divine freedom as meeting each other on the same level. The sub-titles of the second volume of *Theodramatik* are noteworthy in this regard: *Die Personen des Spiels. Teil 1: Der Mensch in Gott; Teil 2: Die Personen in Christus*. The key word here is "in". We recall Balthasar's insightful formulation

with respect to the inner-trinitarian kenosis:

...da der Vater sich darin restlos seiner Gottheit enteignet und sie dem Sohn übereignet: er "teilt" sie nicht "mit" dem Sohn, sondern "teilt" dem Sohn alles Seine "mit": "Alles Deinige ist mein" (Joh 17, 10). 66

The divine autonomy of the Son is no less absolute because it is given him by the Father, precisely because the Father gives himself (absolute freedom) away in the Son, and not just a "share" in his freedom.

Furthermore, the indebted, gratuitously received freedom of the finite creature is radically contingent since it is not its own ground and fulfillment. It is freely called into existence and beyond itself into fulfillment by and in absolute freedom. This is not true of the divine freedom, which is its own ground and "fulfillment" (as fullness)--precisely as trinitarian freedom.

E. ANALOGOUS AUTONOMY

We have tried to show how the relationship between finite and infinite freedom is characterized by an analogical structure, which for Balthasar is grounded in the trinitarian structure of infinite freedom. The Son is the concrete analogy of freedom. True human freedom is understood as

participation in the Son's freedom. This participation allows a real but relative autonomy for human freedom, since strictly speaking, only infinite freedom is absolutely autonomous.

We have seen that the term "autonomy" appears a number of times in Balthasar's work. It does not seem to play an especially important role, however, at least in the sense that he nowhere specifically defines the term or enters into detailed discussion with the history of the term's philosophical and theological importance. Along with a number of other expressions, "autonomy" is used by Balthasar to stress the real sphere of action or self-actualization which God gives the world of finite freedom, and within it, to each individual finite freedom, as the condition for a genuinely dramatic confrontation in love.⁶⁷ This "autonomous" realm, however, does not exist "apart" from God's autonomy, since true human autonomy is precisely a graciously given share in the autonomy of the Son.⁶⁸ It is clear, therefore, that the term plays a completely different role in Balthasar's work than, say, in the modern philosophical discussion since the Enlightenment.⁶⁹ From the outset, Balthasar understands finite freedom and infinite freedom together. God's autonomy does not threaten man's freedom, but makes it possible. Since human freedom is seen as an analogous image of the divine freedom of the Son, God's autonomy cannot be considered to be heteronomous with respect to human freedom, but rather its source and true fulfillment.⁷⁰ This is important to keep in

mind when we consider Balthasar's understanding of person, mission and obedience in the following sections.

F. FREEDOM: RESPONSIBILITY OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION;
SIN AND GRACE

We have seen how in the Son, finite freedom receives from God the real power of self-determination and a real sphere within which it can creatively express and actualize itself. According to Balthasar, God withdraws into a certain hiddenness in order to provide such a sphere of actualization for finite freedom. He speaks of *Latenz*. In doing so, God opens up new paths and possibilities for the actualization and fulfillment of finite freedom, paths which lead into the divine freedom itself as exemplified in the Son. Radically this means that human freedom, carried and empowered by God as the only source of real freedom, has the responsibility to acknowledge God as its real ground and fulfillment (and so to affirm the truth about itself and actualize itself) or to deny God as its ground and fulfillment (and so fall into self-alienation and destruction).

Raum für Freiheit aber erhalten sie nur wenn der freilassende Gott in eine gewisse Latenz zurücktritt, wenn er, der von keinem Ort abwesend sein kann, ein gewisses Inkognito annimmt, worin er nicht nur scheinhaft, sondern wirklich der Freiheit viele Wege offenhält... In diesem Öffnen unbetretener Wege--"zu neuen Ufern!"--öffnet er

doch nicht einfach die Leere, sondern den Raum unendlicher Freiheit, somit sich selbst, und in sich die alle endliche Freiheit umwaltende exemplarische Idee. 71

For Balthasar, therefore, the fact that God withdraws into a certain hiddenness is not a sign of abandonment or disinterest, but a sign of love and trust. His hiddenness can be understood as loving respect before the real freedom which he offers his creatures, and of the risk he is willing to incur in order to take the freedom of his creatures seriously. God does not abandon finite freedom, but accompanies it at a certain distance in order not to overwhelm it, in order to give it the real realm of freedom it needs in order to make possible a freely chosen union in love.

This is expressed for Balthasar in the parable of the talents.⁷² The man who, setting out on a journey, entrusted his property to his servants, gave each time and means according to his ability to exercise his freedom and imagination in the use of his property. The master respects the ability of each and trusts them in the exercise of their abilities. The servants, for their part, have a real responsibility to use the entrusted talents properly. The talents, after all, belong not to them, but to their master.

Balthasar sees in this parable a good understanding of the real but relative autonomy given finite freedom by God. Like the master in the parable, God is to a certain extent hidden. God's

hiddenness is a sign of his respect for and trust in the freedom of his creatures. Like the servants who are clearly charged to active, responsible management of their master's property, each individual finite freedom has the responsibility to actualize the talents given it--its unique share in the freedom, and as we shall see, in the mission of the Son. The parable makes clear that a great risk is involved. For Balthasar, the hiddenness of God makes possible not only the relatively autonomous exercise of finite freedom, but also its misuse.

In creating finite freedom, God takes into account the possibility of error. Error is understood in this sense as the failure of the finite creature to recognize God, and in God, the ground and fulfillment of its own freedom. The finite goods of this world can obscure the vision of the infinite good which is the source of all goods. In the search for the infinite which appears hidden in the finite, the finite creature can either build idols or give up in despair entirely, convinced that all is mere appearance.⁷³

More significantly, in creating finite freedom, God takes into account the possibility of sin: the conscious refusal of the creature to acknowledge and exercise his relative autonomy as a participation in the divine freedom of the Son, and thereby attempt to be his own absolute ground. As we saw above, true human autonomy is always characterized by the necessary acknowledgment of countless other individual freedoms, and the consequent indebtedness

of all finite freedom to absolute freedom.⁷⁴

In these terms, one might call sin the absolutizing of the autonomous pole of finite freedom in such a way that its gratuitous and indebted character are not simply forgotten, but denied. This is an attempt, ultimately, to live out a lie, a contradiction:

Aber sie kann freilich diesen Widerspruch zu leben versuchen: den Pol des *autexousin* (*liberum arbitrium*) so zu behaupten, daß der andere Pol (die Mitbejahung der Quelle der Freiheit wie ihre Breite) auf den ersten reduziert und so das "Aus-sich-selber-sein" in ein "Einzig-durch-sich-selber-sein" (*autarkia*) umgedeutet wird. Damit stockt die Bewegung endlicher Freiheit, die lebendig nur bleibt im Fluß von der unendlichen Quelle her zum (damit identischen) unendlichen Ziel hin. 75

This is at the heart of the Yahwist account of the Fall ("to be like God") and Paul's condemnation in *Romans* 1, 18ff of those who would suppress the plain truth shown by God, and do "not honor him as God or give thanks to him". From a specifically trinitarian perspective, Balthasar can underscore the contradiction involved in such an attempt:

Sie ((endliche Freiheit)) will gleichsam--was absurd ist--göttliche Natur sein, ohne an deren Personalität teilzuhaben, die diese Natur je verschenkt, empfängt, verdankt, und verströmt, als hingegebene repräsentiert. In diesem Nein klafft in der Kreatur der Widerspruch auf gegen ihren Analogie- und Imago-Charakter, den sie

aufgrund ihrer Ortung innerhalb der trinitarischen Relationen notwendig haben muß. 76

Because sin is a reality, human freedom must itself be set free. True human freedom is "freedom set free" (*befreite Freiheit*). Balthasar concludes his consideration of freedom in *Theodramatik II/1* with an indication of the essential relationship between freedom and grace, a theme which he again takes up in the third volume of this work.⁷⁷ Human freedom must be freed from its manifold imprisonment which results from its efforts to find in itself, apart from God, its own ground and fulfillment. Freedom "from" also implies a freedom "to". Finite freedom must be freed to the true freedom which is graciously revealed in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son, and shared through the work of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸ We shall see how this involves a process of expropriation-appropriation (*Enteignung-Aneignung*), a continual transformation in Christ (*Angestaltung an den Sohn*)⁷⁹, when we treat of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church in the following chapter. After seeing how the Holy Spirit is active in the life and mission of Christ, we shall be in a position to see how the Holy Spirit leads finite, fallen freedom to its fulfillment in Christ.

The incarnate Son is the source of all true freedom. To live in him is to live in freedom. To live in him is to be reborn through the Spirit to the new life of grace, to participate in the gracious birth of the Son from the Father.⁸⁰

Thus the grace which God gives to his finite creatures, the grace which effects the opening up and liberation of finite freedom, is nothing else but a share in his own eternal life and freedom.⁸¹ Grace is God's free and freeing gift of himself in the Holy Spirit.

SUMMARY

In the first chapter of this study we saw how Balthasar understands the Holy Spirit to be God's freedom par excellence. He calls the Spirit the freedom of God in person (*die personifizierte Freiheit in Gott*).. As such, the Spirit is God's absolute boundlessness (*das völlig Entschränkte in Gott, die letzte Öffnung Gottes in sein eigenes, vollkommenes Außen*). In the Spirit, God is ever-greater, ever-new. Within the Trinity, God is able to share himself, to give himself away completely without losing himself or being diminished in any way. This eternal, gracious self-emptying of the Father is the inner-trinitarian foundation for what, in the economy of salvation, we call grace. From a kenotic perspective, Balthasar understands the Spirit as the identity in God of self-possession and self-surrender, of absolute freedom and gratuitous indebtedness. Precisely as the Spirit of the Father and Son, the Spirit is the expression in person of the eternal fidelity of God's boundless freedom.

In the Spirit, God is also able to be ever-greater, ever-new outside himself. We touched on this at the end of the last chapter. There we saw how, for Balthasar, the Spirit is the epitome of God's self-communication outside himself: (*der Inbegriff der Mitteilung Gottes "nach außen"*). In the present chapter, we have tried thusfar to follow this theme more closely. We have seen that Balthasar understands finite freedom as a real sharing, a real participation in God's own freedom, possible by virtue of the trinitarian structure of infinite freedom.⁸² Through the Spirit, God shares his freedom in a "second kenosis", the creation of finite spirit and the world of finite freedom. This second kenosis is not identical with, rather analogous to the inner-trinitarian kenosis. Whereas the freedom of the Son is identically the infinite freedom of the Father, completely emptied out in the generation of the Son, the freedom of the finite creature, even as a sharing in the Son's freedom, is radically contingent. It is neither its own ground nor its own fulfillment. To put it in other words: God is absolute freedom; finite spirit "has" freedom as an utterly gratuitous sharing in God's freedom.

The fundamental paradox of human freedom lies precisely in this tension. As finite, it is radically contingent: it cannot ground itself, or guarantee its existence and fulfillment. Nonetheless, human freedom is a real sharing in God's infinite freedom, by virtue of its ground and graced fulfillment, not in itself, but in the freedom of the incarnate Son.

In the final analysis, according to Balthasar, true freedom is communion-in-difference with divine freedom by virtue of God's free self-donation in Jesus Christ, the concrete analogy of freedom, and the union we have with Christ in the Spirit.

Thus from the very beginning, finite spirit is created for gracious union with and fulfillment in absolute Spirit.⁸³ It is the Holy Spirit who is and brings about this communion-in-difference between God and individual human beings. The Holy Spirit is God's freedom in person and the graciously given, personal share in God's freedom. In this sense, the Spirit is the one who sets us free, frees us into the freedom of Christ.

It must be said that such an understanding of human freedom as analogous participation or sharing in God's freedom has its difficulties. Balthasar uses a host of terms to refer to this "participation".⁸⁴ Still, what these terms actually mean is not quite clear. And that is precisely the problem. Words like "participation" and "sharing" seem, at first glance, to have an obvious meaning. And yet, it becomes clear very quickly that this is not the case at all. In fact the whole history of Christological and trinitarian theology could be considered as attempt to clarify just such concepts!

Perhaps this is impossible, since we are speaking about something that will always remain a mystery:

philosophically, a variation of the ancient, and remaining problem of the one and the many; theologically, the mystery of the creation, and most radically, the Incarnation.⁸⁵ While more conceptual clarity would be desirable, it seems to me that Balthasar's greatest insight and contribution lies in the Christological and trinitarian context in which he approaches the problem. For the Christian, the answer to the question as to how finite freedom can be a true sharing in infinite freedom receives its "answer" in the incarnate Son, where infinite freedom and finite freedom are one, without confusion, without division.⁸⁶ And, as Balthasar points out, one cannot understand the gestalt of Jesus Christ except in a trinitarian way.

Balthasar shows that human freedom cannot be conceived apart from divine freedom and that it is called beyond itself to fulfillment in divine freedom. Therefore, divine freedom is not, and cannot be, a threat to human freedom. God is not a threat to human autonomy, but rather its very source, guarantee and fulfillment.⁸⁷ This is not, and cannot be, the result of philosophical speculation alone, but is rather the revelation in Jesus Christ of the "togetherness of finite and infinite freedom". This is the "good news" for finite freedom which is seeking its fulfillment.

Thus, Balthasar does not develop a "neutral" anthropology. His understanding of finite human spirit and freedom is grounded analogically in the

concrete, historical Christ-event. For Balthasar, an adequate anthropology (and therefore an adequate understanding of the world which man recapitulates) can only be reached within Christology. Everything remains abstract as long as it is not focused upon Jesus Christ, the absolutely concrete revelation of the truth of God and of the world.⁸⁸

This brings us to the subject of the next section of this chapter: the trinitarian gestalt of Jesus Christ. With the Incarnation of the Son, God empties himself in a third and utter kenosis. We shall be particularly interested in the person and role of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

II. THE LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Thus far we have seen how Balthasar understands the creation of the world as a kind of second kenosis in which God graciously shares his own divine freedom with human beings. The possibility of the creation of finite freedom is grounded in the inner-trinitarian generation of the Son by the Father, which can be understood as the *Ur-Kenose* of the divine love and freedom. True human freedom is an analogous sharing in the freedom of the Son, concretely revealed in Jesus Christ. From the very beginning, the second kenosis of the creation had as its ground and goal the third kenosis of the Incarnation. In the Incarnate Son, the very inner realm of divine life and freedom is opened for human beings. Here and here alone can finite freedom find the infinite fulfillment for which it was created. This fulfillment does not come as something "owed" it, or as a result of its own achievements or desires, but as pure gift.¹ Here and here alone can fallen, sinful man find the healing and liberation to true freedom which means eternal life for him.²

Beyond the relatively formal reflections on the relationship between infinite and finite freedom which we have seen thus far, we wish now to turn to the concrete revelation of the relationship between divine freedom and human freedom in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. It cannot be our goal to enter into an examination of Balthasar's entire Christology. In this area,

there are already a number of helpful introductions and studies.³ We shall attempt merely to present Balthasar's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit with regard to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Having done this, we will be able better to understand the Christological dimension of authentic Christian spirituality and, therefore, the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christian believers, which is the ultimate goal of this study.

A. BALTHASAR'S CHRISTOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

Before we turn to our consideration of Jesus and the Spirit, it might be helpful to situate Balthasar's approach somewhat in the contemporary Christological discussion and to indicate briefly the main lines of Balthasar's Christology.⁴

Balthasar has remarked that all Christology has an elliptical form, due to its source.⁵ Christology is built around two poles because its source, the witness of the earliest Christian community to Jesus of Nazareth, is precisely a witness of faith: Jesus is the Christ. One could call these two poles the "witnessed content" of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ and the "witnessing form" of the Church's confession in faith. The problematic of the relationship between these two poles has been expressed in many different ways. One important question which has formed the modern Christological discussion

is, what is the relation between the concrete, historical Jesus and the Christ proclaimed in the Church's faith.

In our century, it was R. Bultmann who in a dramatic way sought to stress the existential importance of Christian faith. According to him, it is unimportant--indeed impossible--to get beyond the Christ proclaimed in the Church's faith by asking about the concrete history and personal identity of Jesus of Nazareth. What is all-important is the saving significance of faith for me. It has been suggested that the heart of Bultmann's Christology lies in the understanding of Jesus Christ as the eschatological revealer of God, who calls man to obedience and so opens up the possibility of new existence in faith to him.⁶ Important are not dogmatic definitions, but the existential confrontation between Christ and the believer through the preached word.

Bultmann was certainly correct to emphasize the importance of the existential dimension of the kerygma and the life of faith for Christology. However, even his famous pupil, G. Ebeling, realized that the kerygma can only have ultimate existential significance for me if it is firmly rooted in the historical Jesus. Bultmann's reduction to the pure fact of Jesus' existence and claim is insufficient. One must ask who Jesus was and what he was about. Only the bond to the unique, concrete historical person of Jesus can save the Christological confession, "Jesus is the Christ", from arbitrary existential interpretation. For

Ebeling, the faith of the Christian is made possible and is grounded in the faith of Jesus. Only in him has the true essence of faith come to its pure, certain expression. Jesus is the "Informer" of faith. He is the perfect believer, and so the model for all other believers. He doesn't merely bring knowledge about faith, but makes concrete faith possible in that he himself brings man the utter certainty of God's faithful love. Christian faith finds the only authentic form and rule of faith in Jesus. The problem here, as it has frequently been pointed out⁷, is that it is not at all clear what faith in Jesus could mean. And indeed, for Ebeling, Jesus really isn't the "content" or "object" of our faith, but functions as a way to and a model for our faith. Correspondingly, the meaning of the cross and resurrection as significant for salvation is relativized.

In sharp reaction and in strong contrast to Bultmann, K. Barth stressed the absolute priority of God's self-revelation in the Christ event. The human response of faith is of secondary importance to the content, or object of faith: the utterly free, sovereign revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The world only has being in Christ. It must look to Christ to discover its true meaning. Anthropology is dependent upon Christology, and not the other way around! For Barth, the true reality of God and the world, and the possibility and reality of a relationship between them, is revealed in the cross and resurrection of Christ, and otherwise nowhere. Nonetheless, Barth's is not merely a Christology "from above". Precisely because

of his starting point in the concrete life and mission of Christ, particularly in cross and resurrection, one can view his approach as a Christology "from below" as well. Only then does Barth raise the question as to the theological presuppositions: the inner-trinitarian being of God and the Incarnation of the Son. The problem with Barth's "Christological constriction" (as Balthasar called it), and the absolute priority that Barth gives to God, is that the relative--but real--freedom and independence of man before God is forgotten or denied. Consequently, for Barth, the human nature of Christ plays hardly any role.

For K. Rahner, on the other hand, the humanity of Jesus plays a central role, precisely as *Real* symbol of God. The Incarnation is seen as the unique, absolutely highest case of the actualization of human reality. Rahner's starting point is what he considers to be the central dogma of the Church: God has become man and this God-become-man is the concrete Jesus Christ. The task of Christology is to formulate this dogma in a responsible, understandable way that both illuminates its inner meaning and excludes every trace of mythology. He tries to do this in his "transcendental" Christology "from below". In a basically anthropological approach he seeks to determine the inner condition for the possibility of the appearance and self-expression of God in human form. Thus, he attempts to show how the unity--without contradiction--of God and man in Christ can be understood as a possibility for man himself in his relation to God. In other words,

"God" and "man" are no longer thought of as strict opposites. Further, Rahner tries to show that man in his concrete created reality searches for a concrete, historical word of salvation from God, and is therefore, in his entire existence, directed toward and dependent upon an absolute mediator of salvation in human form. Only so can the universal saving significance of the unique, historical Christ event as the fulfillment of all human hopes and desires for meaningful existence be understood.

Rahner's Christology, precisely because of its anthropological horizon, stresses the eternal significance of the humanity of Christ as the central saving reality. And yet, he seems to attribute no great role to the concrete life and mission of Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures. Many have criticized Rahner's transcendental approach as abstract and apparently unbiblical. Indeed, his understanding of Christology as self-transcending anthropology and anthropology as deficient Christology⁸ leads one to wonder if the asserted primacy and non-derivability of God's revelation as mediated in the Scriptures is actually clear.

W. Kasper has pointed out that it is not so much the transcendental method of Rahner which must be criticized. Rather, it is the excessively formal character of the approach as he develops it. It is the tension between concrete historical reality and transcendental possibility that reveals the difficulties of Rahner's approach.⁹ Kasper

stresses the non-derivability of the concrete historical self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ as the fulfillment and salvation of man. Christology is not just self-transcending anthropology, as if an anthropological analysis of man's condition would point to Christ. Rather, Christology is the concrete, substantive determination of anthropology, which in itself, necessarily remains open and incomplete. Therefore, Kasper's starting point, beyond the dialectic of "from above"--"from below", is the single history, the single destiny, the single way which led Jesus Christ to the cross and resurrection.¹⁰

Thus, following his teacher, J. R. Geiselman, Kasper begins with the biblical witness to the life and work, the preaching and behavior of Jesus. Kasper suggests that the person and existence of Jesus make a radical claim to universal significance as the utterly unique self-communication of God, and that this can be understood only from a pneumatological perspective. Through the Spirit, Jesus can be so empty that he is fully God's Word. Furthermore, according to Kasper, a pneumatologically developed Christology can understand both the absolute uniqueness and the absolute universality of Jesus Christ. One cannot separate Christology either from pneumatology or from eschatology.

It is precisely in this context that the approach of Balthasar can be understood. He has tried to develop a Christology which begins with the concrete

non-derivable gestalt of Jesus Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and shows how this gestalt can be seen and understood only in a trinitarian fashion--how it indeed reveals the trinitarian love. Finally, he shows how this gestalt reveals its transforming power in the life of the believer. Three main convictions characterize Balthasar's Christology : (1) only the trinitarian dimension of the Christ event reveals its true depths and grounds its power to transform Christian life; (2) the only acceptable approach is the obedient contemplation of the gestalt which God sets before us: specifically, the glory of God as revealed in the obedience unto death of Jesus; and (3) this contemplation is no "neutral", "disinterested" activity. It is only possible in the personal realization of Christ's obedience and love, i.e., in faith.¹¹

Thus, we can see certain similarities and differences between Balthasar's approach and the others we have representatively mentioned. With Ebeling, Barth and Kasper, against Bultmann, Balthasar stresses the importance of the person and mission of Jesus as witnessed to in the Scriptures as the only acceptable starting point and the abiding foundation for Christology, and for the existential life of faith. With Barth, Balthasar acknowledges the absolute priority of God's revelation, but with Rahner and Kasper, emphasizes the analogical freedom and relative independence of man, and so, of his response in faith. Like Kasper, Balthasar attempts to develop a Christology which is beyond the dialectic

"from above"--"from below". Both dimensions must complement each other when one begins with the concrete person and mission of Jesus Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures. Like Barth, and in the spirit of Kasper's call for a pneumatological Christology, Balthasar's approach is strikingly trinitarian.

Having situated Balthasar's Christology at least somewhat in the contemporary discussion, we would now like to draw attention to two related concepts which form the heart of Balthasar's approach: mission (*Sendung*) and obedience (*Gehorsam*). The inconceivable dimension of the ever-greater love of God appears in the world in the Son who, obedient to the will of the Father who sends him (*Sendungsgehorsam*), surrenders himself for sinful humanity on the cross. Jesus is the One who is sent and who understands his very existence as mission. In order to understand or describe the person of Jesus, one must necessarily speak of his mission. Person and mission cannot be separated: indeed, Balthasar develops a theological notion of person precisely as mission (*Personsein als Sendung*).¹²

From two perspectives, "consciousness Christology" (*Bewußtseins-Christologie*) and an "ontological Christology" (*Seinschristologie*)--in terms of the common, central notion of the identity in obedience of person and mission, Balthasar hopes to avoid both a merely functional, one-sided Christology "from below" as well as an unhistorical, static, one-sided "essence" Christology "from above".¹³

His starting point is the New Testament witness¹⁴ to Jesus' consciousness of a unique, eschatological and universal mission to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God. Thus, Balthasar starts with what he calls a "consciousness Christology".¹⁵ Herein is manifested: (1) an incomparable claim to authority based on the conviction that in him the Kingdom of God was appearing (*Anspruch auf Vollmacht*), (2) a total poverty of spirit in self-surrendering obedience to his mission (*Armut, Sendungsgehorsam*), which together can be seen as (3) utter abandonment to the Father who sends him (*Überlassung*).¹⁶

It is from the consciousness of mission that we are to understand Jesus' own consciousness of his unique relationship with the Father. The *Gospel of John* with its use of the concept of "sending" brings out both the trinitarian relationship of the Son to the Father and the soteriological purpose of his mission very strongly. Jesus doesn't obey the Father as one among many. His food is to do the will of the One who sent him. He has come, not to do his own will, but the will of the One who sent him. He does the works of God, utters the words of God, so much so that one sees in him the One who sent him.¹⁷ Jesus, especially in the fourth gospel, understands his very existence, his personal identity, in terms of his mission. The New Testament reflection on the words and actions of Jesus highlights the scandal of the incomparable claim that in Jesus, the Kingdom of God was actually appearing.¹⁸

This distinguishes Jesus from the prophets, who were also "sent" by God, who "received" a mission, whose lives were formed by this mission. Jesus' mission is to be the very presence of the Father who sent him--the revelation of God and his love for the world. In him, there is an absolute identity between person and mission.¹⁹

Jesus' consciousness of his own identity, according to Balthasar, is precisely his consciousness of an absolute, divine mission.²⁰ But then one must ask how someone who is a human being ("like us in all things except sin") can say "I" and speak not as a human person, but as a divine person. Here is where, according to Balthasar, a "consciousness Christology" leads to an "ontological Christology". The identity between person and absolute, divine mission in Jesus can only be understood in a trinitarian context. Jesus is the Son sent by the Father and who identifies himself in obedience so completely with his mission as revealed to him through the Spirit.²¹ The identity in Jesus Christ of person and mission is the economic expression of the inner-trinitarian identity of the Son as the one who proceeds from the Father. As we saw in the previous chapter, the *missio* of the Son is the economic form or gestalt of his eternal *processio* from the Father.²²

The self-surrendering love of God is revealed in the world in Jesus Christ precisely by virtue of his utter obedience to the divine mission to be the appearance of God's love in the world--and otherwise, nothing. For Balthasar, this obedience,

this utter selflessness, is the economic form of the eternal readiness (*Bereitschaft*) of the Son to receive his entire being from the Father and to be nothing else but the Father's self-outpouring love. Balthasar's Christology has rightly been called an "obedience Christology".²³

Having summarized briefly the main lines of Balthasar's approach to Christology, we turn to the relationship between mission, obedience and the Spirit in the life of Jesus.

B. THE MISSION OF THE SON

1. THE INCARNATION

In the Incarnation of the Son, the divine love freely expresses itself in a "third kenosis": the sending of the Son and his redemptive suffering and death on the cross for the sins of humanity.²⁴ According to Balthasar, the Spirit plays a uniquely active role in relationship to the Son. We saw in the previous chapter that the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity is the ever-greater product or fruit of the love between Father and Son. Characteristic of the Spirit's personhood is a certain "passivity": the Spirit is solely a "person from persons" and does not generate further divine persons. Beginning with the Incarnation, however, the Spirit assumes a new role with respect to the Son in which the Son's mission can be seen as a kind of product of the Spirit.

Balthasar notes that the ancient creeds ascribe an active role to the Spirit in the Incarnation, whereas the Son is described with the passive:

"...in Jesum Christum, Filium Dei; qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine".²⁵

For Balthasar, the new role of the Spirit with respect to the Son is the revelation of the specifically economic structure of the Trinity.²⁶ The active role of the Spirit in the economic Trinity is already to be found in the trinitarian structure of the recounting of the Annunciation to Mary in *Luke*. Hail, O favored one, the Lord (God the Father, the God of Israel) is with you (*Lk* 1, 28). Behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High (*Lk* 1, 31-2). The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God (*Lk* 1, 35).

As Balthasar interprets this passage (certainly in light of later dogmatic development)²⁷, the Incarnation reveals the economic distinction of the trinitarian persons.

Vielmehr geht in diesem Augenblick die Differenz der göttlichen Personen am Ereignis der Sendung (*missio*) auf: der Vater ist der Sendende und darin der Auftraggebende, Befehlende, der Sohn ist der Gesendete, sich dem Auftrag Unterziehende, Gehorchende; dies wird radikal darin klar, daß er menschwerdend seine Sendung nicht selber aktiv begründet und gestaltet...sich vielmehr restlos

in diese Sendung hinein verfügen läßt. Aber auch der Heilige Geist fungiert im Ereignis in keiner Weise als eine Art stellvertretender Vater, denn er läßt nur den Sohn des einzigen Vaters Mensch werden, freilich in einem unfäßlichen Schöpferakt (*dynamis* Lk 1, 35; vgl. Mt 1, 18), der seinen Titel Spiritus Creator rechtfertigt und das ewige Wort zum fleischgewordenen Wort macht. 28

a. The Passive Role of the Son as the One Sent

The first thing we note about Balthasar's interpretation of the Lukan text is that the Incarnation is a sending event. It is not so much as if the Son comes into the world or that the Son takes on human flesh. Balthasar stresses that the Son is the One who is sent into the world, who becomes man by virtue of the action of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Son in the Incarnation is down-played insofar as it is described passively. He is sent by an "Other", conceived by an "Other" and born of an "other". Why is this significant for Balthasar? What is behind the passive language of the biblical text?

According to Balthasar, Jesus Christ is the concrete revelation of the kenotic love of the trinitarian God precisely as Incarnate Son. Here he follows the traditional Thomistic maxim that the economic Trinity is truly the revelation of the immanent Trinity. In the immanent Trinity, the Son is the complete self-outpouring of the Father in love (*processio*) and nothing else but this self-expression. This is why, when God freely

"decides" to express himself in the world, the Father sends the Son (*missio*), his perfect self-expression, into the world, and not, say, the Spirit. The mission of the Son into the world is the economic expression of the eternal procession of the Son from the Father.

But already in the immanent Trinity, the eternal Son is nothing of himself. He is solely the expression of the Father. The Son is the One who receives (*der Empfangende*) all that he is from the Father, and in this sense one can speak of a certain "passiveness". One must hasten to add that the "passiveness" can also be considered to be the "activity" proper to the Son: i.e., his absolute readiness to be nothing of himself, but solely the expression of the Father's love (*verdankende Bereitschaft, das ewige Ja zum (Sich-)Gegebensein*).²⁹ According to Balthasar, these two aspects cannot really be separated. Terms like "active" and "passive" applied to the Trinitarian persons cannot be pressed too far. Still, one could say that the personhood of the Son, beyond the opposition active-passive, is to be the expression of another person. His entire activity serves not to reveal himself but to reveal the Father.

Er ist Person in Gott, nur sofern er "Dienst" am Vater ist. Ein "Dienst", der mit der Liebe vollkommen übereinfällt, weil der Vater ihn aus Liebe gezeugt hat und der Sohn sein Wesen darin erblickt, dem Vater diese Liebe in der gleichen unendlichen Vollkommenheit zurückzugeben, mit der er sie und sich von ihm empfangen hat. 30

The personhood of the Son is his readiness to serve

the Father, his eternal desire to be nothing else but the expression of the Father's love and will.³¹ As we saw previously in our discussion of divine and human freedom, Balthasar emphasizes the fact that this inner-trinitarian "obedience" of the Son, i.e., his "self"-surrender to the Father precisely as the perfect expression of the Father's "self", is the mode of the divine freedom proper to the Son. The Son is not less free because he receives his freedom from the Father. He expresses this freedom precisely in being the expression of another. The inner-trinitarian relationship between the Son and the Father is characterized by absolute freedom in the concrete form of loving obedience. And, this is exactly what is mirrored economically in the "passiveness" of the Son in the Incarnation.

As man, too, Jesus Christ is the Son whose entire person consists in his readiness to receive all that he is from the Father, to be nothing else but the expression of the Father's will and love. That the Son freely places himself at the total disposal of the Father from the very first moment of the Incarnation is the consequent expression of his eternal, inner-trinitarian personhood.

According to Balthasar, the obedience which characterizes the entire life and mission of Jesus has its beginning here in the Incarnation. This obedience is, as we have seen, the economic form of the Son's eternal obedience to the Father. Divine freedom, therefore, can and does express itself concretely as the obedience of the Incarnate Son! Obedience is for Balthasar the key word.

As we shall see, it is only in obedience that the Son can truly enter into the human situation, and it is only if this obedience is the real expression of divine freedom, that the obedience of the Incarnate Son can be redemptive. It is precisely in light of the obedience of the Incarnate Son that the role of the Holy Spirit takes on significance for Balthasar.

Here is where we turn to the properly active role which is assumed specifically by the Spirit beginning with the Incarnation.

b. The Active Role of the Holy Spirit

Why is it that the Spirit assumes a new role here? Balthasar does not speculate on how the Spirit "lets the Son become man". It is accomplished by virtue of a divine *dynamis* which must remain an incomprehensible mystery to us. Nonetheless, the Lukan description of the Annunciation makes it clear to Balthasar that in overshadowing the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit (not the Father, not the Spirit merely standing in for the Father) brings about the birth of the Son. Striking is Balthasar's rather unusual use of the expression Spiritus Creator in referring to the role of the Spirit in the birth of the Son.³² Beyond the overshadowing of the Virgin at the Incarnation, the significance of this title lies in the fact that the Incarnation is the beginning of the economic mission of the Son, and it is precisely the Spirit

who founds and informs the entire personal life-in-mission (*Sendungsexistenz*) of the Incarnate Son. From the very beginning the Son born of the Virgin can be called Son of the Most High. This is critical for Balthasar precisely because he identifies person and mission in the Son. Jesus' mission is not merely a project which he must accomplish, not merely a task which is assigned to him. Jesus is, as a person, his mission. This is why for Balthasar, the Spirit begins his active role at the Incarnation, and not, for example, later at the Baptism of Jesus. Jesus' personal identity, which is his mission, is to be the concretization of the divine self-surrendering love in the world. And surely, if as Luke writes, Jesus is to be called the Son of the Most High precisely because he is born in a unique way through the power of the Holy Spirit, then we are to understand that Jesus is full of the Spirit from the very beginning. Otherwise how could he be the personal presence of the divine love in the world? It is the work of the Spirit to make the divine love a concrete reality in the world first in the Incarnation of the Son, and then through Him, in the lives of believers.³³ Thus it would seem that the active role of the Spirit in the Incarnation, and his continuing presence in Jesus from the very first moment of his earthly life are witnesses to Jesus' divinity.

In reality, the significance of the active role goes beyond this, according to Balthasar. The Spirit is not just "in" Jesus as the Incarnate Son born by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit

is not just "possessed" by Jesus in view of his personal unity with the Father. According to Balthasar, the Spirit is "over" Jesus precisely as one who is sent. In terms of the identity which he sees between the person and mission of the Incarnate Son, Balthasar calls the Spirit the Creator of the mission-existence of Jesus (*Schöpfer der Sendungsexistenz Jesu*).³⁴

For Balthasar, the whole human existence of Jesus (which includes his teaching, his action, his passion, death and resurrection), is life in and from the Spirit. The Spirit manifests the divine personal identity of Jesus (his union with the Father) precisely in his human existence. It is by virtue of obedience to the Spirit "over" him that Jesus' earthly existence can be genuinely human, and as such, the revelation of the divine love in the world.

We wish to examine this more closely by taking a careful look at the nature and significance of Jesus' mission and his obedience vis-a-vis his mission.

2. THE MISSION OF THE SON AS GOD'S KENOSIS

Balthasar holds that the Incarnation has the cross as its motivation and fulfillment from the very beginning.³⁵ The sending of the Son into the world, which through the disobedience of sin had rejected

God's love, is the expression of an incomprehensible kenosis.³⁶ As Paul writes to the Philippians: he, who "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (*Phil* 2, 6-7). In the Incarnation, the infinite God does far more than simply lower himself to enter into the finite world. According to Paul, "he who was in the form of God" took on the "form of a slave", the form of one, says Balthasar, enslaved to sin and to the death which is specifically caused by sin. Therefore the kenotic mission of the Son is not merely his assumption of human existence as such, but his assumption and in some sense identification with the sin of all humanity. Here is precisely where the obedience of the Son takes on its specific economic and soteriological dimension.³⁷

3. THE SOTERIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE

In the Incarnation, the Father sends the Son into the sinful world in order to reconcile all things to himself. In order that the Son can accomplish this reconciliation with the loving Father, he must truly enter into the sinfulness of the human situation, not just externally "as if", but from within, in complete solidarity with humanity in

the alienation of sin.³⁸

But the Son is the perfect, self-surrendering expression of the Father's love and could therefore never "choose" to abandon the Father in sin. Therefore, his identification with sinners cannot be the rejection of God but the unquestioning obedience to the Father whom he loves, and who out of love hands him over into the godlessness of the fallen world.

Es kann ja nicht der Wille des Sohnes sein, mit dem Nein der ganzen Welt vor dem Vater zu erscheinen, sondern nur den Willen des Vaters--die Sendung-- bis in die äußerste Finsternis hinein zu erfüllen.³⁹

Out of obedient love, the Son freely goes "where you do not wish to go" (*John* 21, 18). The complete expression of this self-surrendering love in the godlessness of the world alienated from God by sin is found in the darkness of the abandonment on the cross. To seek God in the realm of utter godlessness, in order to reveal him where, by definition, he could not possibly be, is an act of unsurpassable "blind obedience".⁴⁰ This solidarity with humanity in the hopelessness of sin reveals the radical dimension of the real humanity of the Incarnate Son, and the radical dimension of God's love. Christ's obedience "unto death, even death on a cross" as the revelation of the divine love (*Liebesgehorsam*)--a love greater than which cannot be conceived--is the central interpretative key to Balthasar's Christology.

Dieser Gehorsam stellt sich jetzt als das Grund-
element der Christologie heraus, die Ermöglichung
sowohl des Ereignisses der Menschwerdung wie der
menschlichen Existenz Christi wie des entscheidenden
Werkes als des Worumwillen von beiden: des
Kreuzes, das sich in der Auferstehung bestätigt
findet. 41

We have spoken of Christ's solidarity, his identity
with sinners. A further dimension of the saving
significance of Christ's obedience must now be
brought out. Christ's entrance into the sinful
world, his solidarity with all men and women,
even unto his identification with sin (2 Cor 5, 21)⁴²
finds its goal on the cross, where Christ dies
for our sins. No one can decide for himself to
take on the sin and guilt of another who is
worthy of the Father's judgment, as if the divine
judgment were merely some kind of external punish-
ment to be carried out--regardless by whom. It
is the Father who has the authority to "decide"
that the death of the Son on the cross can be
the representative judgment and condemnation of
the sins of the world. And it is precisely because
it is the Father's will that the Son can freely
assume the weight of the sin heaped upon him.
Thus according to Balthasar, it is only by virtue
of obedience that the death of Christ can be a
death for us and for our salvation.

Der Grundakt der Existenz Jesu Christi auf Erden
ist sein absoluter Gehorsam an den Vater aus Liebe;
dadurch wird ebensowohl seine vollkommene
Transparenz zum Vater, das heißt sein lauterer

Wort-des-Vaters-Sein ermöglicht, wie auch seine Beladbarkeit mit der Gesamtsünde der Welt. 43

Finally, because the obedience of the Son in solidarity with sinful humanity is perfect, it is saving: the Incarnate Son redeems humanity vicariously from the disobedience of sin.

Wir kennen keine andere ökonomische Gestalt der Trinität als die eine, historisch erfolgte, und diese hat wesentlich auch soteriologischen Sinn: der dem Vater ewig gefügige Sohn hat in ihr als Mensch den für die Sünder stellvertretenden, ihren Ungehorsam innerlich erlösenden "Gehorsam durch Leiden zu erlernen" (Heb 5, 8). 44

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS SHAPER OF JESUS' LIFE-IN-MISSION

Now that we have briefly shown the soteriological significance of the obedience of Christ in his mission from the Father, we are in a better position to understand the importance which Balthasar places on the active role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Incarnate Son. For it is precisely the role of the Spirit to make possible the obedience of Christ, and this in two senses. First, through the mediation of the Spirit, the Son as man can receive his mission from the Father in obedience. The Holy Spirit is "over" the Incarnate Son. Secondly, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Son is able to carry out this mission:

his obedience is salvific. The Holy Spirit is "in" the Incarnate Son. What does it mean to say, as Balthasar does, that the Holy Spirit is "in-over" Jesus?

When the Father sends the Son out into the world, ultimately into the very depths of the godlessness of sin, their relationship takes on a new dimension according to Balthasar. The economic relationship of the Son to the Father is characterized not only by the eternal Son's nearness to the Father, but also by the distance of sinful man from God. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son, as the union-in-person of Father and Son, takes on a correspondingly new dimension.⁴⁵

Der Geist behält vom Beginn der Menschwerdung her eine entsprechende ökonomische Vermittlungsgestalt zwischen Vater und Sohn... Der Geist in-über ihm aber ist es, der in seiner ökonomischen Gestalt durch die Weise, wie er dem Sohn den Willen des Vaters vermittelt, diesen ((für die Sünder stellvertretenden, ihren Ungehorsam erlösenden)) Gehorsam ermöglicht. 46

Here we see that the active, economic role of the Spirit is to mediate the will of the Father to the Son, and in so doing, to make possible the Son's salvific obedience. The Spirit is in Jesus as the Son of the Most High, but in the economy of salvation, the Spirit is also over Jesus as the one who concretizes the will of the Father, which the Son must at all costs carry out. Balthasar understands the accounts of Jesus'

Baptism in this context: the Spirit comes down from heaven and remains over Jesus. It is the Spirit who drives Jesus out into the desert, and who in every moment of his mission reveals the concrete will of the Father anew.⁴⁷

That Jesus, who has the Spirit without measure within him as the Incarnate Son, nonetheless "allows" the Spirit to shape his life-in-mission as the concrete mediation of the Father's will, is an expression of the Son's divine kenosis. The Son who was in the form of God empties himself precisely by allowing the Spirit to be the objective norm or rule of his existence in the world.⁴⁸

a. Trinitarian Inversion

According to Balthasar, this is the result of a trinitarian-soteriological inversion.⁴⁹

Am verwirrendsten ist die *heilsökonomische Umkehrung des Verhältnisses zwischen Sohn und Geist*: während der Geist innergöttlich aus dem Vater und dem (oder durch den) Sohn hervorgeht, wird der Sohn durch den Geist Mensch und durch denselben Geist in seiner Sendung geleitet. Als der, der sich in der Selbstentäußerung seiner Gottgestalt unter den Willen des Vaters stellt, läßt er auch den vom Vater ausgehenden, vom Vater verfügt^{en} Geist über sich die Macht einer Regel des väterlichen Willens gewinnen... 50

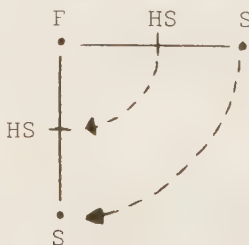
What does Balthasar mean by "inversion"? Recalling

the previous chapter we saw that the Spirit in the immanent Trinity is the fruit of the ever-greater love between Father and Son. The Spirit is the expression in person of the absolute freedom and fulness of this love. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and can reveal nothing else except the Father and the Son, eternally one in love. As the "last" of the trinitarian persons, the Spirit is in a special way determined by the other two. Moreover, the Spirit does not "generate" new trinitarian persons. Beginning with the Incarnation, however, as a result of a trinitarian "inversion", the Spirit is in-over Jesus, the Incarnate Son. Now it is the personhood of the Son as the Incarnate One, which is "determined" by the Spirit, who functions as the mediator of the Father's will. This mediation has a special character. According to Balthasar, the Holy Spirit assumes the power of a rule over the Son, which must be obeyed at all costs. The radical nature of the obedience required of the Son is expressed in the following text:

Der Geist...ist für ihn Inbegriff des Willens des Vaters, dem er gehorcht, der ihm Gesetz ist (Mt 5, 17; vgl. Mk 3, 35) und ihn zum Ebed, zum "Knecht" macht, welcher sich nicht als ein Charismatiker auffällig benimmt, sondern aus dem ihm "auferlegten Gottesgeist" Gottes "Recht" in lautlosem, gewaltlosem Gehorsam durchsetzt (Mt 12, 18-20 = Is 42, 1-4)... Der in Jesus präsente Geist des Vaters ist für ihn absolute, unbeugbare Regel, die (wie der Ölberg zeigen wird) absoluten Gehorsam verlangt... 51

b. The Freedom of the Mission-Obedience of Jesus

Before we indicate why Balthasar seems to place so much emphasis on Christ's unquestioning obedience, it might be advisable to prevent a mis-interpretation of Balthasar's notion of trinitarian inversion. He points out that what he calls an inversion during the earthly life-in-mission of the Incarnate Son is not a "mythical" change in God, but rather the translation (*Umlegung*) of the immanent Trinity into the economic. The obedience of Jesus to the Father through the mediating Spirit in-over him is understood as the economic articulation of the inner-trinitarian "obedience" of the Son, which consists in his utterly free, eternal readiness to be nothing but the perfect expression of the Father's love and will: (*Entsprechung*). Balthasar offers the following sketch:⁵²



This diagram makes it clear that the economic obedience of the Son is grounded in his inner-trinitarian obedience to the Father, which is precisely the mode of the divine freedom proper to the Son. Therefore, as much as Balthasar stresses that the Son does not do his own will,

but the will of the one who sent him; as much as he describes this obedience as the unquestioning execution of an unbendable rule or law, one must always remember that the Father's will does not appear as a heteronomous command and the obedience of the Son is expression of his divine freedom. One cannot conceive of the Incarnate Son's obedience to the Father as if he were confronted with a mission and the command to carry it out, and then "decided" to obey. Both the saving mission of the Son and his utterly free acceptance of this mission are one from before all time.

Das äußerste Ende, in das der Sohn geht, ist die Offenbarung eines sonst nicht erkennbaren Anfangs, nämlich daß der ganze Erden-Gehorsam des Sohnes seine Quelle nicht in einem spontanen Entschluß seines menschlichen Ich hat, sich einem fremden Auftrag zur Verfügung zu stellen, sondern in einem je-schon-Entschlossensein, das seine gesamte irdische Existenz grundlegt. Er ist immer schon der, in dessen Raum "der Vater *seine* Werke tut" (Jo 14, 10). 53

Therefore, Jesus does not obey the Spirit in-over him as the expression of a will or mission "foreign" to him. The Spirit who mediates the Father's will in the concrete shaping of the Son's earthly life-in-mission is not a foreign, merely external Spirit. It is not only the Spirit of the Father, but also the Spirit of the eternal Son. And precisely because the Son is filled with the Spirit without measure (Jo 3, 34), the mediation of the will of the Father is not from "outside",

but from "above" and "within"; not heteronomous but "homo-nomous".⁵⁴ The "will of the Father" is in fact the economic expression of the eternal trinitarian plan to save humanity from sin and death and to graciously share God's own eternal trinitarian life with humanity.

Der väterliche Wille, der im Pneuma dem Sohn übermittelt wird, ist in der Tat der ewige Ratschluß der Weltversöhnung... Reflektiert man dies, so wird deutlich, daß die Inspiration Christi durch den Geist ihm beides zuträgt: ökonomisch eindeutig den Willen des Vaters, aber in diesem verborgen seinen eigenen trinitarischen Willen. Der väterliche Wille, den der Geist dem Sohn je-jetzt zuträgt, ist somit das Gegenteil eines ihn von außen und oben her überfallenden--sei es als auferlegte Pflicht oder als fremder dionysischer Rausch--sondern auch in der ökonomischen Distanz das ewig-Heimatliche. 55

Thus the will of the Father is truly the eternal will of the Son. But in the economic mission of the Son, this aspect is hidden in such a way as to make possible the obedience of the Son.

The Spirit "over" Jesus is no contradiction to the Spirit "in" Jesus. The Spirit whom he obeys step for step throughout his earthly life-in-mission as the objective expression of the will of the Father is the same Spirit within him and active in his ministry. In the power of the Spirit in Jesus without measure, Jesus can completely, with utter certainty, surrender himself in obedience to the Spirit over him.

Aber der Geist in Jesus ist jetzt ganz damit befaßt, auf den Geist über ihm zu achten; sein ewiges Einverstandensein mit dem Vater, seine ewige Spontaneität und sein Verfügen über den Geist ist wie gebunden und konzentriert auf den Gehorsam an den väterlichen Geist... 56

It is interesting to note that Balthasar sees in the double function of the Spirit the relative truth of both sides of the long-lasting "*filioque*" debate. The presence of the Spirit within Jesus as the Incarnate Son, the Spirit which Jesus "exercises" in the healings, and in the power of which he is able to carry out perfectly the Father's will--beyond all human capabilities--, is the economic form of the Spirit "*filioque*". The Spirit which comes down from heaven and remains over him, "driving" him out into the desert, and shaping his life-in-mission unto the cross, is the Spirit "*a patre procedit*".⁵⁷

This all means that in obedience to the Spirit over him, Jesus is most completely himself: the one who possesses the Spirit without measure. In shaping the life-in-mission of Jesus, the Spirit gives economic form to the deepest and truest reality of the personal identity of the eternal Son. For this reason, Jesus' obedience is the expression of an absolutely unique freedom and sovereignty.⁵⁸

To shed some light on the "identity between freedom and being driven by the Spirit", Balthasar draws on the example of artistic inspiration.⁵⁹ An artist is most free when, no longer trapped in

the indecision of having to consider many different possibilities for the execution of his work, he is finally "possessed" by the idea inspiring him and surrenders himself completely to its demands. When the inspiration is genuine, the work of art reveals both an inner coherence of "necessary" structure and all the marks of personal genius and creative freedom.

The Holy Spirit inspires Jesus in his mission in an analogous way, according to Balthasar. Jesus does not shape his life according to his own ideas and plans, but in obedience to the Spirit who inspires him with the Father's will. In so doing, the Spirit leads Jesus into his own truest, creative freedom. Jesus' mission (precisely as his personal identity) is something living and dynamic. It is not "already there", prefabricated, waiting for him to carry it out mechanically, the way a child learns to print by tracing over letters already drawn. On the contrary, the obedience to the Spirit which informs Jesus' life-in-mission requires and presupposes his own creative freedom and responsibility in the carrying out of the Father's will.

In another context, in an analogy with the theater, Balthasar speaks of the Holy Spirit as a kind of prompter who word for word, scene for scene, gives the actor-Son his part.⁶⁰ The fact that the actor-Son has the responsibility to play the role given him by the author-Father, as "whispered" to him in each moment by the prompter-Spirit, does not exclude the actor-Son's interpretative

freedom. On the contrary, it assumes it and provides the material in which his freedom as an actor can become concrete. Therefore, although the author has a definite primacy⁶¹ with regard to the actor and the prompter (or director), it is by no means a tyrannical relationship. The author continues to be present in his work but as one who opens up the creative "space" of the part. He will certainly influence both actor and director, but therein precisely make their creative activity possible. Moreover, says Balthasar, the "play", the world drama, is not the production of a text which has already been written. As the drama of the living interaction of divine and human freedom "in Christ", it is "composed" and "acted out" simultaneously. This is why the Son doesn't receive his "part" (the will of the Father) in advance, but only word for word, moment for moment in each new situation.

Die Menschwerdung ist nicht die xte Aufführung einer im Archiv der Ewigkeit längst bereitliegenden Tragödie. Sie ist ursprünglichster Vorgang, so einmalig und so unabgegriffen wie die ewige je-jetzt sich vollziehende Geburt des Sohnes aus dem Vater. 62

Thus Balthasar makes it clear that Jesus' obedience is the appearance and fruit of real freedom. This is ultimately why his obedience is salvific for the world. In Jesus' obedience the tension due to sin between obedience and freedom is overcome. Finite, human freedom is

redeemed and graciously given a share in the freedom of God which has appeared in the Son.⁶³

Denkt man sich die Menschwerdung des Logos als die Vollendung menschlichen Selbstseins (und nicht etwa als eine Überwältigung der menschlichen Natur und ihres menschlichen freien Willens durch ein numinoses Beschlagnahmensein vom göttlichen Willen), dann muß in Jesus Christus die Einheit von beidem anerkannt werden und dem Christen als Vorbild dienen: vollkommene freie Selbstverantwortung der eigenen Tat und Haltung-- und vollkommene Ausrichtung nach der absoluten göttlichen Freiheit, die für Jesus der Wille des Vaters ist, vermittelt durch den Heiligen Geist. Dieser Geist oktroyiert ihm den väterlichen Willen nicht auf, sondern stellt ihn ihm vor und wirkt als des Sohnes eigener Geist auch in seiner menschlichen Freiheit, damit diese in ihrer eigenen Entschlossenheit sich dem absoluten Willen erschließe. 64

c. The Significance of the Trinitarian Inversion

In trying to come to a better understanding of Balthasar's notion of a trinitarian inversion, beginning with the Incarnation and manifesting itself in the new in-over relationship between the Spirit and the Incarnate Son, we have seen how Balthasar emphasizes that no mythical--and certainly, no arbitrary--change in God occurs. From the perspective of the Spirit as both the ever-greater fruit and as the objective bond or covenant of the love between Father and Son, one can make the active role of the Spirit as shaper of the earthly life-in-mission of the Son plausible. From the perspective of the Son, we have seen how

Balthasar stresses that the obedience of Jesus is the expression of the utterly free trinitarian obedience of the eternal Son.

The Spirit "over" Jesus cannot be separated from the Spirit "in" him. The obedience of Jesus is the expression of an unheard of freedom. We have seen that in a variety of contexts, Balthasar stresses the one dimension over the other, without ever wanting to isolate them from each other. He can speak of the absolutely free obedience of a son as opposed to the slavish obedience of a servant. On the other hand, he can stress that the Son does not obey himself, but the Father, precisely in the human form of a slave obedient to death on a cross. How the eternal Son can leave behind his divine form⁶⁵ and truly take on the form of a slave; or, to put it in other words, how the obedience of the God-man can be at once divine and sovereign but also human and blind, will remain a mystery. It is hard to come to a final judgment, since Balthasar frequently mentions only briefly and in passing the traditional categories and discussions of this problem. Nowhere, for example, do we find an extended discussion of the history of the theological discussion of the relationship between the human and divine will of Christ. It is clear that Balthasar presumes the dogmatic definition of two wills in Christ, but it seems that he is not inclined to approach the matter with the traditional concepts.

In Balthasar's approach as a whole, it seems hard to oversee a definite emphasis on the active role

of the Spirit (as the objective expression of the Father's will) and on the absolute obedience of the Son. If this is true, then we should want to ask what Balthasar's particular concern is when, in describing the role of the Spirit, he uses terms like "absolute, unbendable rule", "law" or "absolute norm". What is he getting at when he speaks of the Son's "mute", "absolute obedience", the obedience of a servant or slave.⁶⁶

Balthasar seems to place great emphasis on the fact that despite the eternal unity of the trinitarian will to save humanity, a real differentiation--even opposition--becomes visible between the Father and the Son. Both Paul and John make clear that Jesus does not carry out his own will, but solely the will of the Father. He does not obey his own conscience or act out of his own conviction. He does not as man obey his own will as God. The fact is that Christ does the will of an other, the one who sent him, and that these two wills appear in dramatic confrontation in the Garden: "Not my will, but thy will be done".⁶⁷

This radical differentiation is the expression of the necessity of Christ's obedience to the Father precisely as a consequence of his real humanity, which ultimately includes his free kenotic solidarity with humanity in the godforsakenness of sin.⁶⁸

Insofern ist jene "Inspiration" vom Vater her...nicht

einfach der innere Drang seiner Liebe, sondern die Einfügung in die ihm vom Vater her gegebene Regel und Führung des Heiligen Geistes (der Sendung), der ihn "treibt" (Lk 4, 1.14usf.). Daß während der "Erniedrigung" des Sohnes der (im Ewigen von Vater und Sohn ausgehende) Geist einen Primat über den ihm (oder durch ihn dem Vater) gehorchenden Sohn erhält, ist Ausdruck dafür, daß seine ganze Existenz auf das Kreuz hin als solche funktionell-kenotisch bestimmt ist. 69

Without such differentiation, which for Balthasar has its possibility in the inner-trinitarian differentiation or "opposition" of persons, the reality of the human will of Christ, and so, the reality of the dramatic confrontation between God and sin, is not taken seriously.⁷⁰

Diese "unendliche Entfernung", die den Modus der Gottentfremdung des Sünders in sich hineinholt, wird aber immer noch die höchste weltliche Offenbarung der Diastase zwischen Vater und Sohn im Heiligen Geist innerhalb des ewigen Wesens Gottes sein. 71

Balthasar's approach from the active role of the Spirit in the mediation of the Father's will "in-over" Jesus, as an absolute rule and objective norm seems not only to be an attempt to avoid monothelitism in his strongly incarnational Christology.⁷² Even more significant is the centrality which Balthasar gives in his whole theology, especially soteriology, to Jesus' experience of godforsakenness on the cross, which is emphasized in its depths in the experience of Holy Saturday.

According to Balthasar, this "in-over" relationship between the Spirit and the Incarnate Son makes it possible for the Son to live completely in the realization of his identity-in-mission with the Father, and for the Father nonetheless to withdraw in a kind of hiddenness when the execution of the saving mission of the Son requires. This enables the Son ultimately to experience representatively for all humanity, the abandonment of God in the death due to sin.

In other words, while the Father can never actually abandon the Son (the Spirit is precisely the guarantee of the constant identity of the relationship of unity between Father and Son), he can "disappear as a person" behind the Holy Spirit as the objective expression of his will.

Der Passionsgehorsam ist nur dadurch ermöglicht, daß der Vater seinen Willen im Heiligen Geist so sehr objektiviert, daß er als Person hinter dieser Objektivierung verschwinden kann. Der Geist verbürgt die vollkommene Identität des Vater-Sohn-Verhältnisses auch für die Zeit dieser personalen Verfinsterung oder scheinbaren Abwesenheit. Damit kann die nicht nur geschöpfliche, sondern sündige Exzentrik der Welt, für die am Kreuz gesühnt wird, miteinbezogen werden in die (auch in der Gottverlassenheit des Sohnes) unveränderte trinitarische Intimität... 73

The importance, therefore, of the trinitarian inversion for Balthasar is that it explains how the eternal Son can nonetheless enter into solidarity with the utter alienation from the Father due to sin, and through perfect, loving

obedience, overcome this alienation.

5. SUMMARY

For Balthasar, therefore, the Spirit is the key to understanding the dynamism of Jesus' life-in-mission. The mediation of the Father's presence and will by the Spirit does not contradict the fact that the Son "receives" his mission from the Father immediately, precisely as the immediate procession of the Father. The mediation of the Spirit, however, makes it possible that the Son receive his mission in obedience.

The Spirit in his freedom is able to accomplish this mediation in an infinite wealth of possibilities, each according to the concrete situation of the Son's mission. Through the Spirit "in-over" Jesus, the Father is able to accompany the Son through all phases of his mission. This can mean on the one hand, moments of incredible intimacy, which we see often expressed in the prayer life of the Son, and in his consciousness of a uniquely intimate relationship with the Father by virtue of his mission. On the other hand, the Spirit, as the objective expression of the Father's will which shapes the Son's obedient life-in-mission, drives him "where you do not wish to go" (*Jo* 21, 18) into the godforsakenness of sin, where there can be no intimacy with God.⁷⁴

Je nachdem kann für den Sohn auf Erden die Sendung persönlicher oder unpersönlicher erscheinen, kann er in ihr, mit der er sich identisch weiß, den zeugenden und sendenden Vater unmittelbarer sehen oder ihn in der objektivierten Gestalt mehr verhüllt anbeten und (in einem einzigartigen und überschwenglichen Sinn) "glauben". Diese Variationsbreite der Weisen des Sichgebens des Geistes läßt also verschiedene Weisen der Unmittelbarkeit zwischen Sohn und Vater zu, je nachdem, was die Sendungssituation erfordert. 75

This means that Jesus can be conscious of the totality of his mission, without therefore having to know in advance exactly what, apart from his absolute obedience, will be required of him. According to Balthasar, one can and must conclude from the New Testament witness that Jesus, full of the Spirit, was conscious of the eschatological and universal dimensions of his mission, to the point that he claimed the power and authority to be able to mediate participation in the eschatological salvation promised by God.⁷⁶ Jesus consciously lived his life in terms of the "hour" which was to come. But, and this is the important point for Balthasar, it belonged to the essence of his kenotic mission as mediated by the Spirit, that he surrender himself as true man to this mission, to this "hour", without knowing what it would require, and when it would come. Jesus did not demand to know in advance, but left the "day and the hour" in the hands of the Father.⁷⁷

The center of Jesus' attention is not some eternal plan of man's salvation which he would already

know as the eternal Son. Jesus looks solely to the Father who sends him and to the mission to be accomplished as it is revealed to him, step by step, by the Spirit. The mediating role of the Spirit makes it possible for the Incarnate Son to live out his mission as a true man, and in the reality of the true drama between God and the world.

From this perspective, it would seem that Balthasar hopes to avoid the fruitless formulation of the question in terms of the relation of a divine and human consciousness in Jesus.⁷⁸ In fact, Balthasar seems to reject the very possibility of a "double consciousness" in Christ.⁷⁹ Jesus' consciousness is the one consciousness of the Son, precisely as actively, dynamically shaped by the Spirit.

The notion of the Spirit "in-over" Jesus is Balthasar's attempt to express something of the mystery of the hypostatic union. The reality of the union between Father and Incarnate Son is grounded in the inner-trinitarian relations and cannot in any way be impaired. The Spirit, which Jesus possesses in full is guarantee for that. But, the Spirit also makes it possible for this real union to exist in apparently impossible modes. Through the Spirit, the Son can live and experience his relationship to the Father as a real human being.⁸⁰

This is precisely where the soteriological significance of the distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity is seen.⁸¹ While

Balthasar would avoid identifying the economic and the immanent Trinity, lest it appear that God must "go outside himself" in a relationship with the world in order to "come to himself", he clearly maintains that the economic Trinity is truly the revelation of the immanent Trinity. If Jesus is not the eternal Son, then his obedience cannot be redemptive for humanity. On the other hand, simple identification of the economic and the immanent Trinity cannot, according to Balthasar, explain the real obedience of Christ and therefore fails to appreciate the real drama of the confrontation between divine and human freedom.

The new role of the Holy Spirit during the life-in-mission of the Son on earth and the corresponding obedience of the Incarnate Son indicate (1) the real radicality of the divine kenosis in the Incarnation, (2) the corresponding distinction which must be made between the economic and the immanent Trinity, and (3) the real drama of the confrontation of divine freedom and human freedom.

C. THE FAITH AND PRAYER OF JESUS

We have seen how Balthasar attempts to shed light upon the mystery of the kenosis of the Son in a pneumatological context. The active role of the Spirit permits the Father to send the Son into the very depths of the sinful world, so that the

Son, as true man and in solidarity with all sinners condemned to the death of sin, he can conquer sin and death from within, representatively for all, through his utterly free obedient love. Although Jesus is aware of his unique identity as the One sent from and by the Father, and although he lives his life completely in terms of the "hour" in which this mission must and will be consummated, he enjoys neither the beatific vision⁸² nor knowledge in advance as to the concrete actions that his mission will require of him. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to reveal to him, step for step along the way, just what the Father demands of him.⁸³

Precisely because Jesus does not know everything in advance (as if he had the eternal trinitarian plan to save the world in all its detail before his eyes from the very beginning)⁸⁴ but must and will surrender himself in complete trust and obedience, not to a plan, but to the Father who sent him, one can speak of Jesus' life as the life of faith par excellence.

Because the obedient execution of his mission requires him to live in incredible openness and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit who reveals to him the concrete demands of his mission each step along the way, one can speak of Jesus' relationship with the Father as one of prayer.

Since both of these themes are very much concerned with Balthasar's understanding of Jesus' obedience in his life-in-mission, and because faith and

prayer will be central topics later on in our study, it might be well for us to consider for a moment how Balthasar understands faith and prayer in the life of Jesus.

1. JESUS' FAITH

We are fortunate enough to be able to draw on an excellent essay directly on this topic, *Fides Christi*⁸⁵, written in 1961. There Balthasar begins by recalling that in the Old Testament, one finds a wide spectrum of expressions for faith, which taken together would describe the adequate response of the chosen people and of each individual thereof to the utter fidelity of God who has graciously entered into covenant with them.⁸⁶ Faith is primarily the faithfulness of God, expressed concretely in his covenant, and only then, the human fidelity brought about and demanded by God's faithfulness.⁸⁷ This basic characteristic of faith remains essential in the New Testament and is the foundation for what might be called faith "in" the gospel, understood as the acceptance of the kerygma (and its developed expression in various dogmatic statements) as true. Balthasar speaks of Jesus' faith in the first sense, as fidelity. He is the very pioneer and perfecter of our faith (*Heb* 12, 2). Despite the obvious reserve of the New Testament to speak of Jesus' faith and the explicit rejection of such a notion by later theology (including Augustine, Bonaventure and Thomas), one can speak of Jesus' faith

precisely in the categories of, and as the fulfillment of, Old Testament faith. In Jesus we see the absolute fidelity of the Son, present from the beginning, but actualized ever-anew. He lives solely for and from the Father. It is the Father's love, will and commandments which form his life, and not his own wishes and plans. Above all, Balthasar sees Jesus' "faith" in his complete surrender to the Father. He does not demand to know in advance, he doesn't try to anticipate his "hour". Instead, he gives everything into the hands of the Father, accepting all as it comes in complete confidence.

Der Verweis in allem, was der Sohn ist und tut und sagt, auf den Vater...die absolute Zuversicht, das restlose Vertrauen auf den Vater ist die Quelle seiner Kraft...und die er den Seinigen als Glaubenskraft zu empfehlen und durch Vorleben beizubringen sich müht. So geht denn auch dieser Glaube, den er von den Seinen fordert, nicht an ihn (das kommt erst in der Reflexion des Johannes), sondern auf Gott; er aber ist derjenige, der diese Haltung in der Fülle besitzt und sie dem, der sich ihm anvertraut, beibringen kann. 88

Jesus not only possesses this faith in full, but gives believers a share in it. According to Balthasar, the faith of believers is not just belief that Jesus is the Son of God, but in and through Jesus' faith, it is saving participation in the Son's adequate response to God's fidelity.

Christusglaube...ist nicht nur der Glaube, den

Christus *hat*, auch nicht nur der, den er gibt, 89
sondern vor allem der Glaube, der er selber ist.

Faith means to be drawn into Jesus' own inner existence before the Father⁹⁰, which is at once the perfect expression of God's loving covenant fidelity, and the expression of the perfectly adequate response of the Son as man.

...so steht die fides Christi am lebendigen Kreuzpunkt des Bundes zwischen Gott und dem erwählten Volk der Menschen. Indem das Wort Gottes Mensch wird, verkörpert sich in ihm menschenförmig die fides Dei, der Treuebund Gottes mit der Menschheit. Dieser Mensch, der Gottes Sohn als der vollkommene Ausdruck seines Wesens und seiner Liebesabsichten ist, ist die inkarnierte "Treue Gottes"... Weil und insofern er das ist, kann er als der vollendete Mensch mit einem Glauben an Gott antworten, der allen Glauben der Menschheit erhöhend und urbildlich in sich zusammenfaßt und begründet, um so auch der eingekörperte Bund der Menschheit mit Gott zu sein. 91

Here we see one of the main themes of the coming chapters: the relationship between the faith of believers and the faith of Jesus. It seems important to draw attention to it here since it is precisely in Jesus' posture (*Hal tung*) of self-surrender in trusting obedience to the faithfulness of his Father which constitutes, for Balthasar, the essence of faith, and therefore, characterizes authentic life "in Christ". While faith may include the acceptance of the kerygma and its dogmatic formulations as "true", we have seen

from the life of Jesus, that faith is far more than such assent. It is the complete surrender of self to the faithfulness of God which is revealed to us in the self-surrender of the Son. Just as the Holy Spirit has an active role in making possible this surrender and actually accomplishing it in the life of the Son, so too, we shall see that the role of the Spirit in the life of the believer is to lead him or her into the all-encompassing truth (*Jo* 16, 13) of the Son's posture of self-surrender before the Father, in the mission that he "has" and is.

Balthasar is careful to stress the fact that Jesus' "faith" is not merely the general Old or New Testament "posture of faith" lived in its perfection. According to Balthasar, the "qualitative difference" between Jesus' faith and our faith lies in the fact that we receive a unique share in the mission of Christ as a result of our coming to faith, whereas Jesus "has" and is the mission of the Father in the world from the very beginning.⁹² The uniqueness of Jesus' faith lies in the absolute uniqueness of the total identity of person and mission in the Incarnate Son.

Thus in the analogy of faith between Jesus and the believer, which is the specific work of the Holy Spirit, the participation of the believer in the faith of Jesus is characterized not only by a fundamental similarity, but by an ever-greater dissimilarity: intimate union in irreducible difference.

2. JESUS' PRAYER

As the One who is sent, Jesus carries out not his own will, but the will of the Father who sends him. We saw how, according to Balthasar, Jesus was conscious of the uniqueness and absoluteness of his mission (and precisely in this sense, of his "identity"), but that one shouldn't for that reason suppose that he knew from the start just what would be required of him at each step along the way. Quite the contrary: he who was "like us in all things except sin", was led by the Spirit, who revealed in every moment the concrete will of the Father, to which the Son freely surrendered in obedience. We saw how the obedience of Jesus, required by his true humanity, is grounded in the eternal, inner-trinitarian obedience of the Son. The concrete expression of Jesus' free surrender to the Father's will is his prayer. If the *Gospel of John* especially portrays Jesus as the One sent to do the will of the Father, it is the *Gospel of Luke* that emphasizes the role of prayer in carrying it out.

Die Gebetskomponente im Gesendeten wird in ihrer Notwendigkeit um so evidenter, als die Sendung ja nicht als ganze vor seinem Blick aufgeschlagen liegt, sondern Schritt für Schritt nach der Weisung des Vaters (im Heiligen Geist) auszuführen ist und der entscheidende Schlußabschnitt jeder Verfügung des Sohnes entzogen bleibt... "Die Speise" des Willens des Vaters, von der Jesus lebt (Jo 4, 34), ist nicht ein für allemal gegeben; sondern "das Wort", von dem der Mensch lebt, ergeht je-jetzt "aus dem Munde Gottes" (Dt 8, 3 = Mt 4, 4) 93

Prayer is an expression of surrender, of obedience and of trust.⁹⁴ From the point of view of the one sent, we can see prayer as readiness, openness, disponability, attentiveness to the will of the one who sends. It is the necessary precondition and the inner consequence of a life-in-mission. It is in a unique way an expression of the freedom of the Son's obedience, his desire to hear the Father's word, to live from and for nothing else but his will.⁹⁵

The necessity of Jesus' prayer comes therefore, from his existence in mission. Only by obeying the Father's will can Jesus accomplish the mission of the Father in all its universality, precisely as man. Only through prayer "in the Holy Spirit" can he discern the will of the Father as revealed in each new situation. Jesus' life, therefore, manifests a unity between action and contemplation. In all that he is and does, the Son's attention remains fixed on the Father, in order to remain completely sensitive to his commands. And in his contemplation of the Father, he does not sink into inactivity, but does exactly what he "sees" the Father doing (Jo 5, 19-20).⁹⁶

There is another dimension to the necessity of prayer as revealed in the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit: the ever-greater freedom of the Father who sends the Son into the world, and the genuinely dramatic character of this confrontation. Previously we noted that the Spirit reveals to Jesus the will of the Father as required in each new situation. Jesus does not

know the will or plan of the Father in advance in all its detail. Indeed, according to Balthasar, we cannot conceive of God's will or his eternal plan as something which is static, predetermined from the very beginning to which then God himself would fall subject.

Certainly it is true that the will of the Father is a universal and eternal whole. The single, eternal will of God from before all time, in time and unto the end of time is the free creation of the finite world of human freedom, and the gratuitous sharing of trinitarian life with the world through the Incarnation of the Son.⁹⁷ However, one should not conceive this statically. It is not as if God had a plan which he then is forced to carry out.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Holy Spirit is God precisely in his incomprehensible freedom to be ever-greater, not just in his relationship to a finite world, but as infinite (and infinitely fruitful) love in himself. Further, at the beginning of the present chapter, we saw how this inner-trinitarian freedom is the ground for the possibility of the existence of real finite freedom. From both of these perspectives, we can say that God, active in a world where finite creatures have a real share in his freedom, remains utterly free in this relationship. As Balthasar puts it, God is able in the face of humanly unpredictable situations to act in a new way, without having to make a "new decision"⁹⁸. If one takes the reality of the drama between divine and human freedom

seriously, then one must be able to say of God (at least in some sense) that he himself, and the expression of his will in the concrete relationship with the world, can be ever-new and yet at the same time utterly faithful and true to himself. Balthasar would want to avoid terms like the "mutability" of God, but insists that the God of the *Theodramatik* is neither "mythically" changeable nor "philosophically" unchangeable!

Man wird deshalb die Rede von der "Veränderlichkeit Gottes" in der Theologie vermeiden, gerade weil man seine absolute Freiheit, die in seinem Weltplan als Freiheit zu seiner (trinitarischen) Freiheit erscheint, im Sinn behält. Sein Stehen zu sich selbst, zur je-größeren Liebe, die der Vater in der gehorsamen (Selbst-)Hingabe des Sohnes durch den Heiligen Geist offenbart, ist das Beständigste und zugleich, von der Welt aus betrachtet, Beweglichste, was es gibt... 99

God takes the freedom of man seriously. Therefore his concrete action in the world is dramatic and "depends" on the free response of man. This "dependence" is just another expression for the kenosis involved in the creation of finite freedom. The drama of the creation and redemption is not like a script which has already been written and must then simply be carried out by the actors. God's eternal plan exists concretely as event: he is always the One who in each new concrete situation takes the initiative. Therefore, his will can never be reduced to a predictable system or overseeable plan. The only appropriate

posture before the infinite freedom of God who creates and respects finite freedom, is the surrender of systems and predictions, and open readiness to hear his word as it comes today, ever-new. In a word: prayer. Prayer is the stance of one who is obedient, not to a previously known plan, but to the Spirit of the Living God.

D. JESUS' OBEDIENCE AS EXPRESSION OF TRINITARIAN LOVE

This brings us to what might be called the very heart of Balthasar's Christology: the specifically trinitarian obedience of the Incarnate Son as the expression (*Auslegung*) of the absolutely gratuitous kenosis of the divine love.¹⁰⁰ Jesus' mission-obedience (*Sendungsgehorsam*) is self-surrendering love.¹⁰¹ The "must" (*dei*) of the mission-obedience of the Son reveals itself as the "must" of a love so integral and absolute, that it can no longer do anything except to surrender itself to the inner demands of love. This loving surrender is the heart of what we called Jesus' faith and his prayer. The one who loves deeply will in ever-increasing measure be ready to surrender his own wishes and plans, and will no longer concentrate on his own thoughts and feelings, but rather on the beloved. Freed from external requirements and conventions, he finds himself nonetheless all the more "bound" by the inner law of love itself.¹⁰²

Balthasar speaks of *Liebesgesetz* and calls love "the one thing necessary", not because we all need love, but because true love already brings with it, from within, necessary requirements. This is exactly what we see in the "must" which characterized Jesus' life.¹⁰³ The obedience of the Son is so single-hearted, undivided and from the heart, that it has no place for anything apart from the Father's will.

Gerade dieser Gehorsam aber, diese Form der liebenden Hingabe, die jenseits der Unterscheidung von Pflicht und Tat, von strikter Vorschrift und offenklassendem Wunsch aus den innersten Quellen der Liebe Gottes entspringt, gerade sie soll von nun an das Urbild der christlichen Liebe und Hingabe sein: einer Liebe, die sich durch Wille und Wunsch Gottes so absolut gebunden weiß, daß ein Ausweichen unmöglich ist..., daß sie am Ölberg diese Notwendigkeit geradezu als Zwang empfinden kann..., eine Liebe aber, die sich bis ins Äußerste nur aus Liebe und für die Liebe bindet... ¹⁰⁴

The absolute and undivided obedience of the Son, in which he places himself solely at the disposal of the Father (*Raumgeben*), is the revelation to the world of the Son's eternal love, which surrenders itself solely and completely to the Father, and as such, is the perfect expression of the Father's love. Obedience is the inner-trinitarian form of the Son's love and the economic revelation of the "serving character" (*Dienstcharakter*) of the divine love.¹⁰⁵

From a trinitarian context, Balthasar can emphasize the unique role of the Holy Spirit as the guarantee

(1) of the identity between obedience and love in the Son, and (2) of the identity in person between the personal love of the Son, which expresses itself in total self-surrender in mission, and the personal love of the Father, which in Jesus appears in the world.¹⁰⁶

In the life of the Incarnate Son, the nature of true love and freedom is revealed. Obedience as the expression of complete, undivided love is not the opposite of freedom, but the very condition for and expression of true freedom. Obedience is not merely an expression of the finiteness of the world in its relationship to God, but even more profoundly, the result of the creation of the world in, through and for Christ, who is the personal expression of the divine love, precisely as the self-less obedient expression of the Father's self-surrendering love. The obedience of the Son, therefore, is not just the achievement of perfection in the relationship between finite and infinite freedom. More than this, it is the unforeseeable revelation of the trinitarian love and freedom itself, and has this love as its inner form.¹⁰⁷

Thus, in Jesus, we see the revelation of the trinitarian mystery of the identity of freedom and obedience in love. The obedience of the Son, and the obedience which he makes possible for and requires of humanity, is not the expression of a relationship of "power" or "subordination". It is the expression of the fidelity demanded by love itself, the love of the Father poured out, freely and without reserve. We have seen

that for Balthasar, the Holy Spirit is the expression of both of these aspects: the utter freedom and spontaneity of God's selfless love, and the real, unavoidable inner demands of such a love.¹⁰⁸

E. THE PASCHAL MYSTERY: THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Incarnation of the Son is a kenosis which has the cross as its purpose and fulfillment. In this sense Balthasar understands the life and teaching of Jesus as "the way of the cross".¹⁰⁹ It is the cross which determines and shapes the entire life and teaching of Christ. It is the "hour" for which he waits, the "baptism" which he must undergo.

It is from this perspective that Balthasar shows the centrality of the obedience of the Incarnate Son and the corresponding role of the Holy Spirit in his earthly life-in-mission. The Holy Spirit in-over Jesus makes possible his obedient solidarity with sinners, even to the extreme of the "second death" of utter abandonment by the Father, precisely as an expression of his eternal love for the Father.¹¹⁰ The fact that the Spirit assumes the active role of mediating the Father's will as an objective norm for the Son is an indication that Jesus's entire existence in the

face of the cross is kenotically constituted in obedience by his mission.

In his death on the cross, the obedience of the Son reaches its perfection and its absolute limit. Here is where the divine love reveals its true, unmistakable and insurpassable glory and so, its radical difference from all inner-worldly love. The paschal mystery, precisely as a trinitarian event, is the heart of Balthasar's theology. We shall look briefly at the role of the Holy Spirit in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. In doing so, we shall be able to draw together several themes which we have already discussed in the present chapter.

1. GOOD FRIDAY

As we have already seen, Balthasar holds that the obedience of Jesus is soteriologically essential and can only be understood from a trinitarian perspective. Only in obedience, made possible by the Holy Spirit, can the Son enter into the very depths of the godforsakenness of sin. By virtue of the inner-trinitarian unity-in-difference between Father and Son in the Spirit, the Incarnate Son, while remaining one with the Father and perfectly fulfilling his will, can nonetheless be one with sinners, "abandoned" by the Father in the godlessness of sin.¹¹¹

Wir grenzen das Mysterium gleichsam nur negativ ab, indem wir...sagen, daß die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Verlassenheit Jesu vom Vater in der innertrinitarischen absoluten Distanz zwischen der die Gottheit hingebenden und der sie empfangenden Hypostase beruhen muß, wobei diese Distanz von der aus beiden ausgehenden Hypostase sowohl ewig bestätigt und offengehalten wie zur Gottheit als der gemeinsamen, absoluten Gabe überholt wird. 112

If the free self-surrender to the Father's will is to be truly redemptive for humanity, then it must come from within the real situation of man's alienation from God. This requires a real, inner assumption (*Übernahme*) of all that is godless and against God, an identification with the darkness into which the sinner falls by virtue of his disobedience. This mission, and the abandonment which it requires, is a complete overtaxing (*Überforderung*) of the Son, who is bound to the Father in love. For Balthasar, this process of abandonment, as the necessary condition for the complete identification of the Son with the darkness of sin, enters a critical phase in the agony in the garden. The Son, whose entire life is the Father who sent him, is now required to enter the realm of the godless and to carry the unbearable weight of the sinful disobedience of the entire world before the Father. The agony in the garden, the prayers and supplications "with loud cries and tears" that the cup might pass, this is all expression, for Balthasar, of the unimaginable depth of the solidarity of Jesus with sinners.

Jesus carries the sins of the world as one who no longer can or would distinguish his own fate from the fate of sinners. He experiences the fear and horror which by right should come to them.¹¹³ In the garden, the obedience which characterized Jesus' life-in-mission is drastically concentrated.¹¹⁴ Now it is solely a question of the absolute preference of the Father's will for its own sake. There is no hint of explanation, no trace of a consoling hope or confidence in eventual resurrection or glorification.¹¹⁵ Everything is reduced to the opposition "my will-thy will" and the absolute obedience required for the glorification of the Father, whatever the cost. How could it be the will of the Son to identify himself with the world's rejection of the Father whom he loves, whose love he is? How could it be the will of the Son to enter into the final death of godforsakenness in which there is no hope of life? He can freely choose to go the way of the cross only because it is the Father's will.¹¹⁶

We have seen that the Holy Spirit plays a key role in the process of the Son's entrance into and identification with the godforsaken realm of sin. Through the Spirit, the immediate relationship of the Son with the Father can seem more personal and intimate or more impersonal and objective--according to the requirements of the mission. In the garden, the Father withdraws more and more and so "hands over" his Son into the realm of sin. The immediacy of the relationship between Father and Son becomes more and more objective through the Spirit.

This is the beginning of a growing isolation (*Vereinsamung*) from the Father and from those around him which will reach its climax on the cross. Jesus is the one handed over into the hands of sinners, first by his Father, and then betrayed by his disciples and the Jews, and finally by the pagans. One who is handed over in this three-fold way is, in the deepest sense of the word, abandoned by God.¹¹⁷

And it is the handing over of the Son by the Father out of love for the world which is of primary importance. That God sends his Son into the world means that he hands him over to the power of corruption, abandons him to the power of darkness and death, precisely so that in the Son, the entire darkness of sin and death can be judged, suffered through and overcome.¹¹⁸

The cup from which Jesus must drink is the eschatological "cup of wrath" of the Old Testament, which the sinner must drink. The baptism with which he must be baptized is the sinking into the chaotic flood waters from which there is no return.¹¹⁹ The abandonment which he experiences finally on the cross is the complete darkness and alienation caused by the world's sins.¹²⁰

The death of Jesus on the cross is to be understood therefore, as the objective, eschatological judgment: the glorification of God's loving justice and the utter condemnation of sin. Jesus, by virtue of his identification with lost mankind and his representative carrying of the sins of the world through the Spirit, experiences this judgment

subjectively as the hopeless condemnation of godforsakenness.¹²¹

Der Sohn trägt die Sünder in sich mitsamt der hoffnungslosen Undurchlässigkeit ihrer Sünde für das göttliche Liebeslicht. Deshalb erfährt er in sich--nicht ihre Sünde, sondern das Hoffnungslose ihres Widerstands gegen Gott und das gnadenlose Nein der göttlichen Gnade gegen diesen Widerstand. Der Sohn, der sich ganz auf den Vater verlassen hat (bis zur Identifikation mit den Brüdern in ihrer Verlorenheit), muß gerade jetzt vom Vater verlassen sein. Er, der sich vom Vater ganz hat ver-geben lassen, muß jetzt fühlen, daß es "ver-gehens" war. 122

The centrality of Jesus' abandonment as the actualization of the eschatological condemnation of the world's sin is seen in the words attributed to Jesus on the cross. This is expressed above all in the cry of abandonment reported in *Mark*: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (15, 34) It is well known that these words form the beginning of *Psalms 22*, which has played a significant role in their interpretation. Whether or not Jesus' cry refers to, or is the beginning of the recitation of the whole psalm, Balthasar insists that this cry of abandonment must be understood in all its starkness. He rejects the attempts to soften or relativize them in terms of the content of the whole psalm, which according to some exegetes is an expression of the hope and confidence of the one suffering in eventual glorification. Balthasar recalls Irenaeus' arguments against the Gnostics: Christ could not require suffering

from his disciples which he himself had not undergone. In any case, it seems clear that the real experience of abandonment of Jesus is crucial for Balthasar, if Jesus truly carries the sins of the world from within. As the Fathers insisted, what is not assumed, is not saved.

The cry reported by Mark becomes for Balthasar the key to the interpretation of all the other words from the cross, which, according to Balthasar, indicate the objective and subjective reality of the cross as judgment.¹²³ Attention should perhaps be drawn to two of the other words. The handing over of Mary to John is also seen as an expression of the deliverance into abandonment. The apparent concern of a loving son to provide for his mother after his death is of minimal importance. For Balthasar, the real theological significance of this action is Jesus' withdrawal, and in this sense, his abandonment, of his mother! In this way, he draws Mary, the symbol of the Church, into the abandonment of the cross.¹²⁴ As we shall see in the following chapter, the Church is communion in the Spirit with the crucified one, precisely because his suffering and death are inclusively and not exclusively representative.

Finally, Balthasar interprets the Lukan replacement of *Psalms* 22, 2 with *Psalms* 31, 6 ("Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit": 23, 46) as the expression of the completion of Jesus' mission. This is confidence not that Jesus himself will be glorified, but that the will of the Father,

who seems to have abandoned him, has been accomplished.

For Balthasar, the abandonment of Jesus on the cross has a specifically trinitarian character. If Jesus is truly the Son of God, then the abandonment which he experiences must be nothing else than an economic form of revelation of the inner-trinitarian relationships. Balthasar suggests that the Son exists in his eternal "coming from" and "going to" the Father. The sin of the world is drawn into the movement, where it is not merely some foreign obstacle, but as part of the personal reality of the Son himself, freely accepted in love. As sin, however, this reality must be condemned and rejected. According to Balthasar, this cannot leave the trinitarian relationship between Father and Son "unaffected". The eternal relationship between Father and Son takes on the mode of rejection and inaccessibility: presence as "absence". For Balthasar, this can only take place "in the Spirit".¹²⁵

Und der Heilige Geist, der in Gott ewig der Ausdruck dieser gegenseitigen Beziehung ist, hält diese jetzt im Modus des Auseinanderhaltens aufrecht, der das Gegenteil ist eines Gleichgültigwerdens füreinander, vielmehr absolute Liebe, gerade durch absolute Entbehrung ihrer selbst bewußt.¹²⁶

It is the Spirit who makes possible the abandonment of the Son on the cross by the Father, precisely as the economic mode of his intimacy with the Father and his utter solidarity with sinners.

The trinitarian "intimacy" shows itself to be open and powerful enough to include--and so, to overcome--the alienation between God and the world due to sin. For Balthasar this mystery points directly to the mystery of the reality of the Church. Although she is a Church of sinners, she is the on-going presence of Christ in the world as his Body and Bride.

The abandonment of the Son into the darkness of sin and the corresponding obedient identification of the Son in his mission with the guilt of the fallen world reaches a peak in the death of Jesus on the cross. He hangs between heaven and earth, completely abandoned by his Father and by humanity. The darkness of the world's sins into which he has been delivered prevents him from seeing success or even the meaning of his suffering, since sin is, in view of the gratuitously given love of God, senseless.¹²⁷

All has been accomplished out of obedient love to the Father who sent him. He has fulfilled his mission to the very end. Breathing his last, he surrenders his Spirit into the Father's hands. Balthasar sees here in a single act, the breathing out of the Holy Spirit as Creator of Jesus' mission existence, and the expiration of the human spirit of Jesus. Although the two are not identical, they cannot be separated.¹²⁸ Jesus commends the Holy Spirit, who "in-over" him has shaped, accompanied and empowered his life-in-mission, into the hands of the Father as a sign that the

mission has been fulfilled.¹²⁹ That Jesus in the same breath surrenders his human spirit, thoroughly penetrated by the divine Spirit of his mission in perfect obedience, is a sign that the humanity of the Son attains definitive and irrevocable significance in the trinitarian outpouring of the Spirit by the Father and Son. Economically, the Spirit poured out into the hearts of men and women is always the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and can never be separated from his real humanity.

Wo aber der Sohn nichts mehr ist als ein in Todesdunkel versinkender Mensch, dort ist er vollkommenste Durchsichtigkeit und Werkzeuglichkeit für Gott geworden: der letzte Wille des Vaters fällt mit dem letzten Gehorsam des Sohnes zusammen, und das Zurückhauchen des Heiligen Geistes zusammen mit seinem ausgeistenden Geist läßt die Menschheit des Sohnes endgültig eingehen in das eine Prinzip der aktiven Hauchung des Geistes durch Vater und Sohn. 130

The Holy Spirit, breathed out at the end of Jesus' mission, surrendered into the Father's hands and from the Father and glorified Son together poured out into the hearts of believers, is the same Spirit which stood at the beginning of Jesus' life-in-mission. In emphasizing the eternal significance of the humanity of Christ, Balthasar makes the interesting suggestion that the Holy Spirit functions in a special way, precisely by virtue of his unique role in the Incarnation through the overshadowing of the Virgin Mary. In a certain analogy to the Incarnation

of the Son, the overshadowing of the Virgin by the Spirit signifies a special inner contact with mankind and human experience. The Spirit in some sense "experiences" the various dimensions of human freedom vis-a-vis God, so that through his accompaniment of Jesus and Mary, he attains a kind of exhaustive "experiential knowledge" of humanity, including the experience of sin, which shows itself in the suffering which the Son undergoes. It is in this vein that Balthasar interprets the statements of Paul about the Spirit, who in the hearts of believers, cries "Abba, Father" (*Gal* 4, 6) and who "helps us in our weakness" to pray as we ought and "intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (*Rom* 8, 26-7). The Spirit can do this, according to Balthasar, because he knows from within what is in the heart of man, and from above, what the will of the Father is who searches the hearts of man.¹³¹

Aber wenn der Geist die besondere Mensch"erfahrung" aus der Begleitung des Sohnes (und der Mutter) besitzt, so besitzt er sie noch einmal ganz anders und neu dadurch, daß der sterbende Sohn ihn mitauszuhauchen beginnt...als vom sterbenden Sohn dem Vater zurückgehauchter Geist--kommt der Geist je vom Äußersten her, was Gottes väterliche und sohnliche Liebe ersinnen konnte, um im Ungöttlichsten dennoch Gott zu sein, in der Gottverlassenheit (und diese ist erfahrungshaft immer "ewig") des Sohnes vom Vater die unausdenkbare Tiefe der gegenseitigen Liebe zu erproben und auszuloten. 132

2. HOLY SATURDAY

Thus far we have seen how the godforsaken death of Jesus on the cross was the goal and the end of his life-in-mission. The abandonment by the Father is of essential importance according to Balthasar, because in it we see the truth of God's love and the reality of the world's sin. It is specifically the godforsakenness experienced by Jesus on the cross which is the interpretative key to the saving significance of his death for us. Jesus' death is far more than the assumption of the fate of death in solidarity with humanity. It is more than a mere multiplication of ordinary human fear or suffering in death. The abandonment of Jesus by the Father on the cross is the sign that his death is the absolutely unique assumption of the eschatological judgment death deserved by all men and women as sinners, and so, the carrying of the world's guilt.

We saw how, according to Balthasar, the Holy Spirit makes this absolute kenosis, this total self-emptying possible in order to bear the full weight of God's judgment against sin. First, by allowing the Father to "disappear" subjectively behind the objective mediation of his will through the Spirit, and so, to concentrate the entire life and death of the Son into an absolute self-surrender in loving obedience to the Father. And secondly, by empowering the Incarnate Son to the complete loving surrender required of him. The surrender of Jesus' Spirit on the cross is the sign

that it is precisely here where the life-in-mission truly comes to its end and fulfillment. It is only on the cross that the Spirit is surrendered, freed to be poured out into the hearts of men and women.

Jesus' death is the victory of God's love, a love which loves to the absolute end (*Jo* 13, 1), over the disobedience of sin and the death due to sin. As such, one can consider his death one with the resurrection, and the breathing out of the Spirit on the cross as one with the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church and the world at Pentecost.¹³³ It is the Spirit surrendered on the cross which is the source of eternal life which has swallowed up death. But between Good Friday and Easter Sunday is the emptiness of Holy Saturday.

While understanding the Paschal Mystery in the essential unity of cross and resurrection¹³⁴, Balthasar, in a way unique among contemporary theologians¹³⁵, wishes to throw light on this mystery precisely from Holy Saturday. Therefore, it is important to turn our attention to the mystery, even though we have already begun to speak of the resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit.

The Word of God sent into this world reaches the end and goal of his mission in the utter silence of godforsaken death. The reality of the emptiness and silence of the Word is revealed to the world on Holy Saturday. And, like the silent church, stripped and empty of both Word and Sacrament on this day, stands between Good Friday and Easter

Sunday, the mystery of Holy Saturday stands at the center of Balthasar's theology as the interpretative key to the essential unity of the Paschal Mystery. All theology as human word about God must face the silence where God's own Word becomes speechless.¹³⁶

While holding the essential unity of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Balthasar clearly distinguishes between the death of Jesus on the cross and the descent into hell.¹³⁷ The mystery of Holy Saturday is not just the death of Jesus, but his death precisely as entrance into the eschatological, and so timeless, realm of godforsakenness where there is no longer any hope. Only from within the realm of the ungodly can the Son fulfill his mission to save humanity by bringing it back to its true home: trinitarian love. While Balthasar, in a typically Johannine fashion, understands the raising up of Jesus on the cross as his "exaltation", he speaks of a kind of suspension of the Incarnation on Holy Saturday,¹³⁸ an indication of the inconceivable depth of the self-alienation which God, out of love for sinful humanity, withstands.¹³⁹

Holy Saturday then, underscores the radical nature of Jesus' death. That is the first thing that must be emphasized. Jesus' death is solidarity in the grave with all the dead, precisely as the sign of God's ever-greater love. It is not merely a brief "journey" into the realm of someone else's death, in order to proclaim the good news of redemption. According to Balthasar, the meaning

of Holy Saturday can be approached from two directions: (1) the solidarity of the crucified One with the dead, and (2) the announcement of the reconciliation of the world which has been accomplished by God.¹⁴⁰ How does Balthasar understand these two points?

Balthasar criticizes to a large extent a theological tradition stretching over the last thousand years which saw in the *descensus ad infer(n)os* the triumphant appearance of the risen Lord, preaching the good news of the redemption to the dead. He suggests instead, that the essence of this mystery is not so much an "activity" on Christ's part, but his passive being-with-the-dead. He thinks that an expression like *descensus*, which seems to indicate activity, misses the real point.¹⁴¹

If, following such passages as *1 Peter 3, 18-20*; *4, 6* one sees in Christ's descent among the dead the announcement of the victory over the death due to sin, one needn't imagine this as a victory-winning battle of the risen Christ. According to Balthasar, Jesus enters the realm of the dead, not as a victorious warrior, but as one who sinks into hell, dead under the weight of the world's sins.¹⁴² The solidarity of the crucified One with all the dead is certainly the announcement of God's ultimate victory over sin and death, precisely because it shows the power of God's ever-greater love to be God, even in the realm of the "god-less". But the power which is manifested is not the power of an active, triumphant conqueror, but the power of the cross; the loving representative solidarity

with fallen man. Thus Balthasar understands the announcement of God's victory among the dead not so much as subjective activity on Jesus' part as much as the making known of what has objectively occurred on the cross--as witnessed to by the passive solidarity of the crucified One with the unredeemed, godforsaken dead.¹⁴³ Balthasar, following Thomas, sees a proportionate relation between Christ's soul in Hades and his body in the tomb. One should not attribute "activity" to the soul of Christ among the dead any more than one can attribute life to his body in the grave.¹⁴⁴

Again, it is the soteriological principle of solidarity already found in Irenaeus which predominates: only what is suffered is also healed and redeemed. If on the cross, Jesus suffered the sin of the world to the very depths, then he must also experience in solidarity the hopeless alienation from God of sinners in hell. Otherwise he would not have known and redeemed all the dimensions of sinful human existence.¹⁴⁵

...sosehr die Todeserfahrung objektiv eine innere Überwindung und damit einen Triumph über die Gegenmächte enthalten mochte, sowenig brauchte davon subjektiv irgend etwas erfahren zu sein: denn dies hätte ja gerade das Gesetz der Solidarität aufgehoben. Man vergesse nicht: unter den Toten gibt es keine lebendige Kommunikation. Solidarität heißt hier: Mit-einsam-sein. 146

Insofar as the Redeemer in solidarity with the dead

sparing them the total experience of the utter, "second" death due to sin, he suffers this himself representatively for all. Beyond all human experience of death, he is the only one who can and does suffer the utter depths of the death in which there is no longer any hope.¹⁴⁷

Like Nicholas of Cusa, Balthasar sees the distinctiveness of Holy Saturday in Christ's powerless solidarity with the hopeless godforsaken.¹⁴⁸

He can no longer wage an active battle against the powers of hell, neither can he subjectively triumph. His ultimate powerlessness is precisely his vision of the hopelessness of the death which he "experiences". For Balthasar, this is not a vision of a "populated" hell or purgatory, but the experience of the chaos of sin itself: *"die reine Substantialität der 'Hölle' als der 'Sünde an sich'".*¹⁴⁹

Diese ((Karsamstag)) Erfahrung braucht nichts anderes zu sein als das, was eine ernst genommene Solidarität im Scheol, der von keinem Erlösungslicht aufgehellt wird, fordert: denn das ganze Erlösungslicht stammt einzig von dem bis zum Ende Solidarischen her. Und er kann es deshalb vermitteln, weil er stellvertretend darauf verzichtet. 150

The solidarity of the Redeemer with sinners in the death of the godforsakenness due to sin is the final consequence of his mission from the Father. This solidarity, this being-in-death, is existence in utter obedience, complete kenosis.¹⁵¹ Balthasar borrows the term "cadaver-obedience" from Francis

of Assisi to describe it. As we previously indicated, this can only be understood correctly from a trinitarian perspective. The Father, the creator of human freedom with all its possible consequences, bears the responsibility of his creation by freely sending the Son into the world, ultimately because of the world's sin, into the judgment of hell. This is possible only because the Son from all eternity desires nothing else but to be sent by the Father as the perfect expression of his kenotic love. And, because the Holy Spirit, the objective expression of the eternal saving will of the Father and Son, remains "in-over" Jesus as the bond between Father and Son, even in the godforsakenness of hell.¹⁵²

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Holy Spirit is the personal expression of the fact that the divine Love in itself is ever-greater, ever-newer; not because it remains short of self-perfection, but because it is infinite fullness in self-surrender, a fullness and surrender, which because infinite, know no bounds. As such, the Holy Spirit is also (economically) the personal expression of God's ability to "go outside" himself in the free self-surrender of love without "losing himself" or alienating himself. Thus Balthasar understands the soteriological significance of the Son's utter kenosis in the descent into hell in terms of and ultimately as expression of the kenotic love of the the immanent Trinity,¹⁵³ the laying bare of the innermost mystery of the heart of the Trinity.¹⁵⁴ Not only can God enter the created, finite world, but he can enter into

the very depths of the world's sinfulness in order to save it.

The fact that God, in his love for the world, hands over his Son into the darkness of sin and that this could lead to the abandonment of the cross and the descent into hell can be appreciated only from the reality of the inner-trinitarian dimensions of boundless self-surrender: the reality of the Spirit as the creative, transforming power of the "powerlessness" of a self-surrendering God.¹⁵⁵

In terms of the mystery of Holy Saturday, we might say that the specific role of the Holy Spirit is the preservation of the integrity and identity of the one divine love in its transforming, redemptive identification with sin. God is able to be God even in the realm of the godless. In the Holy Spirit, the Son can be one with the living Father and one with sinful humanity in its godforsaken death.

The saving significance of Holy Saturday is the anchoring of the fruit of the cross through the Spirit in the abyss of the eternal godforsaken death due to sin.¹⁵⁶ Christ, one with sinners in the darkness of their rejection of God, can in his free, obedient "yes" to the Father, embrace and bear the weight of every "no" on the part of humanity, and so overcome the alienation due to humanity's disobedience--in a way that respects human freedom.¹⁵⁷ According to Balthasar, insofar as God gives human beings a true share in his own

divine freedom, they have the capability of rejecting God in a way that appears final from a human point of view, but which does not have to be considered final by God. God is able to do this, not by disregarding or "overrunning" human freedom, but by refusing to abandon him, even when man freely decides to "abandon" God.¹⁵⁸ The descent of Christ into hell means that there is no longer a godless place. It is into this final death that Jesus sinks after being completely stripped on the cross. Out of love, he is simply with the dead. And this is precisely what destroys the godforsakenness chosen by sinners. The sinner, who in his sin wishes to live absolutely alone, without God, and so damns himself into godforsakenness, finds that God accompanies him even there--eternally. We close with a striking text from Balthasar:

Das Psalmwort: "Wollte ich in der Unterwelt lagern, so bist du auch dort" (139, 8) erhält damit einen ganz neuen Sinn. Und auch das "Gott ist tot", als eigenmächtiges Dekret des Sünders, für den Gott das Abgetane ist, erhält einen ganz neuen, objektiv von Gott selber her gesetzten Sinn. Die geschöpfliche Freiheit ist respektiert, wird aber von Gott am Ende der Passion eingeholt und nochmals untergriffen... Nur in der absoluten Schwäche will Gott der von ihm geschaffenen Freiheit das Geschenk der jeden Kerker aufbrechenden und jede Verkrampfung lösenden Liebe vermitteln: in der Solidarisierung von innen mit denen, die alle Solidarität verweigern. Mors et vita duello... 159

3. EASTER SUNDAY

We have seen how the death of Jesus on the cross is the end and goal, and so the key to the understanding of the life-in-mission of the Son sent by the Father out of love into the world. He is handed over to save humanity from the godforsakenness of sin. The cross is the victory of God's self-surrendering love in the free obedience of the Son, even in the descent into hell, over the disobedience of sin and the eternal death due to sin. The faithfulness of the Son in the total kenosis of Good Friday and Holy Saturday is the perfect expression of the faithfulness of God to himself: God is, in himself, self-surrendering love. This is revealed to the world only through the resurrection. One can say that Paul reports not only the earliest, but also the unanimous witness of the entire New Testament when he says that the Christian faith stands or falls with the resurrection of the Lord. The saving significance of Jesus' death "for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15, 3) and his burial have meaning only because of the resurrection.¹⁶⁰

Was das Leben Jesu in Wahrheit war, enthüllt erst das Kreuz; was das Kreuz in Wahrheit war--Erlösung des Kosmos--enthüllt erst die Auferstehung: gerade das absolut Unherrliche, der "Fluch" (Gal 3, 13) und der "Sündeninbegriff" (2 Cor 5, 21) des Kreuzes ist die Voraussetzung dafür, daß die allmächtige Synthese, die in der Auferstehung gewirkt wird, rein göttliche Glorie sein kann. Diese Synthese aber ist zugleich der zentrale,

ja geradezu ausschließliche Inhalt des Evangeliums und damit des Glaubens...und des christlichen Lebens. 161

a. Easter as the Revelation of the Trinity

Only in the resurrection does the mystery of the trinitarian structure of the divine love come fully to light.¹⁶² Of course, it begins to appear in the life and ministry of Jesus, in the agony in the garden, also on the cross and in the godforsakenness of Holy Saturday. But the resurrection is for Balthasar in a special way a trinitarian event. Only as such can it be the revelation to the world of the identity of the glory of the divine love and the "cadaver-obedience" of the Son.¹⁶³

According to the earliest formulations of the Easter proclamation, the resurrection is understood as the work of the Father, who as creator, completes his creative activity through the raising of the dead. In various formulations we find that God raised Jesus from the dead "in power", "in glory", or "in the power of the Spirit". In so doing, the Father witnesses to the truth of his Word, which is the identity of the fullness of eternal love and the emptiness of obedience in the life of the Son. This is the condition for the possibility of the fullness of the Father's presence in the Son.¹⁶⁴ The resurrection is the self-justification of the Father and the confirmation of the integrity of the life, suffering and death

of Jesus as the appearance in the world of the divine love.¹⁶⁵

The resurrection as the justification of the crucified Son "in the Spirit" is at the same time his glorification and enthronement as the Lord before whom every knee must bow (*Phil 2, 9-11*).¹⁶⁶ The Father manifests his Son to the world as the one who, having been raised up from the utter death of sin, is definitively, once and for all, alive, never again to die. For Balthasar, then, the resurrection is not merely the revelation of the truth of a teaching or the continuing significance of Jesus' "cause", but primarily the revelation of the Son as a living person. Jesus who was crucified now lives and death has no power over him. This utter "aliveness" is shown in the spontaneity with which the risen Lord reveals himself in the Easter appearances. The divine freedom of the Father, his power to raise the crucified and buried Son from the dead, also manifests itself in the freedom of the risen Son, by virtue of his sovereignty as Lord, to reveal himself.

Entscheidend ist hier die Offenbarung des Trinitätsgeheimnisses, daß gerade die *Person* des Sohnes die in ihm erscheinende Person des Vaters kundtut. 167

According to Balthasar, it is by virtue of the same kenotic trinitarian obedience which led Jesus to death on the cross and into the god-

forsakenness of hell, that the Incarnate Son "allows" himself to be raised by the Father. Further, the Son obediently "allows" the Father, who has life in himself (as manifested in the raising of Jesus from the grave) to grant him, the Son proclaimed Lord, "to have life in himself" (*Jo 5, 26*). This is what is manifested in the Easter appearances. In the resurrection, the Son receives from the Father the Lordship which he had with the Father from before the creation of the world, but which he, in loving obedience to the Father's will, had freely surrendered. We have already seen how Balthasar understands the kenosis of the Incarnation as a kind of "leaving behind" (*Hinterlegung*) of the form of divinity in the hands of the Father from whom he receives it. He must do this in order to enter the finite world and the infinite alienation between God and man. The Son does not cease to be God because of this *Hinterlegung*. Rather through the power of the Holy Spirit, the identical person of the Son takes on a new economic form.¹⁶⁸ The resurrection, therefore, is not to be understood as the divinization of the man Jesus, but as the reinstatement of the Incarnate Son with the form of divinity and glory which was always his.

Daß Jesus zu dem *wird*, was er sowohl vorweltlich wie auch irdisch schon *ist*, muß in jeder Christologie unbedingt ernst genommen werden: wer darin einen Widerspruch sieht, wird von vornherein an der Verkündigung des Evangeliums vorbeihören und vorbeidenken. 169

Thus according to Balthasar, the formulations which attribute the resurrection to the Father's activity, and those which attribute to Jesus himself the power "to take up his life again", are not contradictory.¹⁷⁰

When the Father grants the Son whom he has raised from the dead the power to reveal himself as Lord of Life to the disciples in his identity with the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, he is not granting him a new, foreign freedom, but the very freedom which is his as Son from all eternity. And precisely in his own freedom, which Balthasar sees dramatized in the spontaneity of the Easter appearances, Jesus is the revelation of the Father's freedom and love which has conquered sin and death and established righteousness forever.¹⁷¹

Finally, the resurrection of Jesus is the revelation of the Spirit. Putting aside the chronological problems of Luke's descriptive periodization in *Acts*, where the events of Easter and the Ascension are separated by a period of forty days, and the Ascension into heaven is made a precondition for the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, Balthasar insists on the essential unity of the resurrection of Jesus and the revelation of the Spirit.¹⁷² This is so in three senses.

First, as we indicated above, the Father raises Jesus from the dead through the Spirit. According to Balthasar, all resurrection of the flesh is his work as *Spiritus Creator*.

Derselbe Geist, der im Auftrag des Vaters die Menschwerdung des Sohnes in der Überschattung der Mutter wirkte, vollendet sein Werk in der Auferstehung dieses Fleisches. 173

The Spirit is the life-giver who at the beginning of creation hovered over the waters, who at the Incarnation overshadowed the Virgin and who in the resurrection raises Jesus to new life out of the grave. In the work of the Spirit, therefore, we see the unity of creation and redemption as the eternal plan of God to freely share his own life.¹⁷⁴

The work of the Spirit in raising Jesus from the dead and in communicating this eternal life to all those who die and rise with Christ, is not merely the final stage of a process begun with the creation of the world. The cross, as we saw above, is God's righteous judgment condemning the sin of the world, a judgment which means the utter destruction of the world of sin in the death of the Son. Balthasar takes *2 Cor 5, 17* very radically: the old has passed away, behold the new has come. That the old world has really ceased to exist is for Balthasar dramatized in the mystery of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

...ein End- und Vernichtungsgericht, durch das "diese Welt", der alte Äon, wirklich zu bestehen aufhört, an sein Ende kommt, und zwar, das ist schlechthin entscheidend, an Jesus Christus selbst.¹⁷⁵

We saw how he spoke of Holy Saturday as a kind of

suspension of the Incarnation, a "dead point", a total break.¹⁷⁶ It is from the darkness of hell, precisely as the utter condemnation of the sin of this world, that the Spirit brings forth the new creation.¹⁷⁷

The risen Son is the first work of the Spirit in the new creation. As Paul wrote the Corinthians: "even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer". (2 Cor 5, 16) We know Christ no longer according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. In the resurrection, Christ becomes a "life giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15, 45); the flesh of sinful humanity which he assumed in the Incarnation is transformed and assumed, in the risen humanity of the Son, into the divine life of the Trinity, where it becomes a source of eternal life for all.

The risen Lord, whose glorified body still bears the wounds of his passion, is the Spirit.¹⁷⁸ He who wishes to live in Christ must live in and according to the Spirit. This is the second sense in which the resurrection is the revelation of the Spirit: as the medium of the very reality of the divine life of the risen Lord and of all those who live in him. The risen Lord identifies himself with the "realm of the Spirit".

Der Geist ist aber nicht nur Werkzeug der Erweckung, sondern Medium, in das hinein sie erfolgt... 179

The fact that the risen Lord is identified with the

Spirit does not mean an end to or a denial of the reality of the Incarnation. The resurrection is surely the abolition (*Aufhebung*) of the limits which God freely chose when the Word became flesh. But the reality of the finitude which the Sohn experienced, especially in the godforsakenness of hell, is not denied but transformed and fulfilled in God: "*nicht desinkarniert, sondern in der Auferstehung pneumatisiert*".¹⁸⁰

Balthasar speaks of a paradox in the indissoluble synthesis in the Spirit between the sinful flesh condemned on the cross and the glorified, spiritual body of the risen Lord.¹⁸¹ As such, the risen Lord is, precisely as Spirit, our concrete access to the sphere of eternal life, and the one who in utter freedom communicates his life giving Spirit into our mortal being.¹⁸²

This brings us to the third aspect of the revelation of the Spirit in the resurrection. The once-and-for-all event of Jesus Christ must remain present in history for all and for all time, not merely as a past fact, but as living event. The Holy Spirit is not only the medium into which the resurrection of Jesus takes place, but also the Mediator of this reality for all men and women.

In the raising of Jesus from the dead, the Spirit begins his economic mission of glorifying the eternal love of the Father and Son which has appeared in the event of the cross. The Spirit accomplishes this work in two interrelated ways.

First, in the objective presentation (*Auslegung, Vergegenwärtigung, Universalisierung*) of the Christ event. Then, secondly, by leading men and women subjectively into the truth of this event (*Einführung, Einbeziehung*). In these two aspects, the Spirit is the Creator of the Church, insofar as the Church is the medium of the appearance of Christ,¹⁸³ the mediating form of Christ (*Vermittlungsgestalt Christi*),¹⁸⁴ and the presence of the fullness of Christ and the work of Spirit mediating him (*Präsenz der Fülle Christi und Werk des den Christus auslegenden Geistes*).¹⁸⁵ These two aspects of the Spirit's work cannot be separated. The objective presence of the Christ event in word and sacrament of the Church¹⁸⁶ has the subjective realization and actualization of this event in the lives of believers as its only goal. Through the Holy Spirit, the reconciliation of the world with God which has been effected in the cross and resurrection of Jesus remains a living, present, and formative event. The Holy Spirit makes this event present objectively precisely in order to give men and women a share in God's eternal life and freedom. Conversely, one could say that the possibility and reality of the subjective realization of the eternal life and freedom toward which humanity strives is grounded and guaranteed concretely only in and through Jesus Christ as concretely present in the world.

The Spirit who leads us into the "fullness of truth" does not simply impart knowledge of an accomplished fact, but enables us to take active

part in the kenotic passage of Christ from the world of sin and death into the world of the trinitarian love between Father and Son. The Spirit is the witness that the obedient self-emptying of Christ is the expression of the utter fullness of divine life. The Father made this kenotic passage possible for all humanity in the handing over of his Son. The Spirit is poured out in order to actualize this possibility in us.¹⁸⁷

In vielen Formeln wird die Verleihung des Christusgeistes, gleichsam das Eingelassenwerden in die Christussphäre, als ein Weg vom Mitsterben, Mitleiden, Mitgekreuzigtwerden, Mitbegrabensein, Mitschwachsein zum Mitauferstehen, Mitleben, Mitherrschen, Mitverherrlichtwerden, Mit-zum-Himmel-Fahren geschildert... 188

In traditional categories, the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier who leads men and women subjectively into the truth of the reconciliation accomplished by the Redeemer.¹⁸⁹ We shall see more closely in the next chapter how Balthasar understands the cross and resurrection, precisely in the unity and eternal presence in the Spirit, as the "existentials" of Christian life.

Thus the witness of the Holy Spirit to the reality and meaning of the Christ event through the word and sacrament of the Church, and the communication of the life which God has made available in the cross and resurrection of Christ are really two interrelated sides of the glorification which is the specific work of the Spirit. In the terms of

Balthasar's theological aesthetics: the Holy Spirit enables us to see and understand the gestalt of Jesus Christ (*Erblickung*) and by drawing us into it (*Entrückung*), transforms us through its life-giving power. Thus Balthasar can refer to the final two chapters of *Herrlichkeit I*, "*Die Vermittlung der Gestalt*" and "*Die Bezeugung der Gestalt*", in their unity as "*das Zeugnis des Heiligen Geistes*".¹⁹⁰ Then again, in the third volume of *Herrlichkeit*, which is essentially Christology, being devoted to the gestalt of Jesus Christ, Balthasar emphasizes the same point:

In der Erblickung lag schon die "Entrückung"... Aufhebung unseres Fremdseins gegenüber der absoluten Liebe... Einbezogen werden in die Sphäre der Herrlichkeit zwischen Vater und Sohn, wie sie in Jesus Christus erschienen ist. Solche Einbergung ist Gnade und das Werk des Heiligen Geistes, der nicht vor uns, nicht über uns, sondern in uns das Leben der Liebe aufquellen läßt... So wird dieses dritte Teil ein Buch des Heiligen Geistes sein und von der Verherrlichung handeln. 191

This text makes it clear that the mediation of the Christ event by the Holy Spirit, which is his work of "glorification", is always the interior, transformative communication of the reality of this event. This transformation of the hearts of men and women is the glorification of the self-emptying love of the cross, and is the real "proof" of the reality and power of Christ's resurrection. In this sense, the Spirit active in the Church, in the life of the Christian community is witness to

the fact that Jesus lives in the Spirit and that he shares this Spirit with those who believe in him. The life of the Spirit of the risen Lord manifests itself not just in signs and wonders, but primarily in the interior life and "mind" (*Gesinnung*) of the community: its prayer, its faith, its active love and its concern for the needy.¹⁹² "By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples". (Jo 15, 8)

As we indicated above, Balthasar understands the resurrection, ascension and Pentecost in their essential unity as the revelation of the Spirit.¹⁹³ In trying to come to a better understanding of the role of the Spirit in the resurrection of Jesus, we have thus alluded to the mysteries of the ascension and Pentecost, and have thereby arrived at the topic of the next chapter, the Church and the Spirit. Nonetheless, before we move on, we would like to devote just a few remarks to each of these mysteries, insofar as they focus upon a distinct aspect of the work and significance of the Spirit.

b. The Forty Days¹⁹⁴

The forty days between the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven belong both to his earthly time and to his eternal time, according to Balthasar.¹⁹⁵ As such, these days have a special significance precisely as the revelation of the inner relationship between human history and God's eternity.

It is a time when Jesus meets his disciples in a new intimacy which destroys the distance and foreignness between their historical existence in time and his eternal existence in the Spirit. As the one risen to eternal life in the Spirit, Jesus nonetheless is present with them in all the ordinary aspects of earthly life: he is seen, heard and touched by them. It is no "other-worldly" ghost who cooks and eats with them: Jesus the risen one, who passes through locked doors, has flesh and bones which one can see and touch! His companionship in these forty days is the revelation that time and eternity do not mutually exclude each other. In Jesus history is saved from endless "passage" and is gathered up and given definitive, eternal reality. Here is genuine presence of the eternal within time.

Die erste, durch keine zweite je überholbare Aussage über die Zeit des Auferstandenen ist die, daß seine Zeit der unsern nicht abgerückt und entfremdet ist, vielmehr in selbstverständlicher Kontinuität mit ihr steht. 196

These forty days are in a special way a time of the Church. During this time the disciples learn that the risen Jesus relates with other men and women in such a way that the glory of his divinity, the presence of eternity in time, breaks through. Jesus shows his disciples concretely what his risen life and what presence "in the Spirit" means, and how he can be with them "all days even unto the end of the world". (Mt 28, 20)¹⁹⁷

The risen Jesus reveals himself and the Kingdom which he preached as definitively present. These forty days have therefore a unique, ecclesiological meaning and stand as a connection between the earthly life of Jesus and the time of the Church. Balthasar sees this as a time of the visible foundation of the Church by the visibly present, risen Lord.¹⁹⁸ Christ explains the meaning of his earthly life-in-mission and dramatizes that the Spirit which is to be sent comes from him, the Incarnate One. For example, the breathing out of the Spirit on the apostles by the visible, risen Lord (*Jo* 20, 22) and the command to await the sending of the Spirit in Jerusalem show, according to Balthasar, that the visible action of the risen Lord should be seen as the inauguration of the invisible action of the Spirit in the Church.¹⁹⁹

4. THE ASCENSION

If the mystery of the ascension is already seen in the resurrection, then this means for Balthasar that the reality of the humanity of the risen Lord, in all that he was and experienced on earth, expressed in the concrete seeing, hearing, tasting, eating and walking together during the forty days, is gathered up and attains eternal significance in the ascension.²⁰⁰ The reality of the economic *missio* of the Son is received into the eternal reality of his *processio*.²⁰¹

Die Zeit der vierzig Tage mit der besonderen Handgreiflichkeit der Auferstehungserscheinungen wird durch sie ((Himmelfahrt)) abgeschlossen und mit dem übrigen Erddasein des Herrn in den Himmel entrückt. 202

Since the resurrection is from the very beginning a resurrection unto the Father in heaven, the mystery of the ascension is an event which expresses a new relationship between Christ and the world rather than a new relationship between Christ and heaven. As long as the risen Christ remained on earth, it might seem as though the reality of the Christ event was limited to a certain time, to a certain place, and to certain people. The ascension, as the necessary condition for the pouring out of the Spirit, is the beginning of the universalization of the concrete Christ event, which as we saw, is in a special way the work of the Spirit. Christ, who ascends into heaven over every particular place and time, is not at some distant edge of the cosmos, but at its very center, equally close to all creatures, places and times, precisely in the Spirit.²⁰³ In his ascension into heaven, Christ turns over his completed earthly mission to the Holy Spirit, who is now entrusted with the glorifying work of universalization.

5. PENTECOST

This brings us to the mystery of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from heaven upon the disciples, and into the world. We have seen how

Balthasar speaks of an economic trinitarian inversion of the immanent relationship between the Son and the Spirit by virtue of which the Holy Spirit "in-over" Jesus shapes his earthly life and serves as an absolute norm for his mission obedience. According to Balthasar, this inversion is cancelled with the resurrection. The fact that the Spirit is now at the disposal of the Son rather than the other way around, is expressed in the freedom of the Easter appearances, and, in the *Gospel of John*, by the breathing out of the Spirit upon the disciples already on the evening of the resurrection.²⁰⁴ We have waited until now to speak of the cancellation of the trinitarian inversion in order to emphasize, as Balthasar does, that the Spirit which Jesus sends as the risen One is the one, eternal Spirit breathed out from Father and Son. In other words, the Spirit promised before the ascension, and poured out on Pentecost, is the sign that the Lord in his glorified humanity is truly with the Father.²⁰⁵ The Spirit breathed out from heaven by the Father and Son is the guarantee of the "success" of the Son's mission of reconciliation: the humanity of Christ is in the Trinity. Thus, the way into the inner life of the Trinity has been irrevocably opened up for all humanity.

If the fact that the Spirit is sent from heaven (where the Father is) expresses the irrevocable opening of the inner-trinitarian life for humanity, the fact that the Spirit is sent by the Son (with the Father) indicates that the glorified humanity of the crucified one remains the uniquely definitive way to trinitarian life. The

Spirit poured out upon the disciples is the Spirit of the one who was freely obedient unto death, the Spirit, through which God has "experienced" the entire human condition in a unique way, the Spirit in which human freedom has been redeemed and elevated: the Spirit of Jesus Christ who is the Lord. The freedom which the Spirit himself is and which he bestows in the hearts of men and women, making them God's sons and daughters, is the concrete divine freedom which is revealed and made available in Jesus Christ.²⁰⁶

Thus, Balthasar emphasizes that the new sending of the Spirit on Pentecost is not a sign that the Christ event is superseded or dispensed with. The continuing activity of the Spirit is not the result of some aspect of the Son's mission which was "left undone". In the Spirit poured out on Pentecost and through the work of this Spirit in the Church, God does not reveal himself more fully. In Jesus' life-in-mission, the love of the Father and the Son and their love for the world has "gone to the very end". The Spirit cannot go "further". The new mission of the Spirit through the Church is to draw the disciples into the eternal Christ event and so to unfold in their hearts the fullness which is already present in Christ.

...der Geist des Vaters und des Sohnes ist über alle Welt ausgegossen, damit das Schöpfungswerk des Vaters, das Versöhnungswerk des Sohnes, beide in die letzte trinitarische Potenz erhoben, sich in ihrer Vollgestalt der Welt zeigen und

in ihrer Vollkraft sich ihr einprägen können. Die Christusgestalt...ist historisch unüberholbar; sie gewinnt...ihre plastische Fülle aber erst durch die Dimension des Heiligen Geistes: und das heißt auch durch die Kirche. 207

The specific mission of the Spirit, therefore, is his work of interiorization, the subjective inner realization of what has been accomplished objectively in Christ. The Spirit of Truth leads the disciples into the inner reality of an event which otherwise seemed to be accomplished apart from them--indeed, in spite of them. Jesus does not remain merely "the Other" who has done something "for" us. By being drawn into the Paschal Mystery through the Spirit, we are enabled both to understand from within and to take active part in what has been accomplished in Christ.²⁰⁸ The Holy Spirit effects the inclusive reality of Christ's "exclusive" (in the sense of unique) representative death and resurrection "for us" and draws us into it, as the Spirit of mission and discipleship.²⁰⁹ In this sense, the Holy Spirit is the inner bond of union between the Lord and the believer, and so the Creator of the community of all those who believe in the Lord: the Church.

SUMMARY

In our reflection on Balthasar's theology of the Paschal Mystery, it has become clear that the

Holy Spirit plays a central role. Balthasar's trinitarian approach enables him to stress the fundamental unity of the cross and resurrection of Jesus and nonetheless to understand the raising of Jesus as the decisively new, eschatologically creative act of God.²¹⁰ In their essential unity, Good Friday and Easter Sunday are separated by the chasm of Holy Saturday, a mystery approachable, according to Balthasar, only from a trinitarian context.

The Holy Spirit as the unity in person between the sending Father and the Son who is sent is also the expression of the identity of the loving will of the Father and the free obedience of the Son. The Holy Spirit "in-over" Jesus is at once the one who makes possible Jesus' total identification with humanity in the godforsakenness of sin and also insures the integrity and accomplishment of his mission-existence. In the absolute kenosis of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, God reveals the essence of the eternal trinitarian love: there can be no question or doubt about the resurrection. It is the very love which God manifests upon the cross, a love stronger than sin and death. In this sense one can speak of the resurrection as already present in the event of the cross. Nonetheless, Balthasar stresses the newness of Easter, underscored by the emptiness of Holy Saturday, precisely to emphasize the reality of the eschatological judgment of sin and death in the flesh of Christ on the cross. The passage from the darkness of sin and death to the light of eternal life is no mere progression or continuous

development, neither for Jesus nor for those who find life in his Spirit.²¹¹ In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which must be understood as the beginning of the general resurrection when the Son of Man comes to judge the world, God announces the "end" of the world and places his Son before the world as the first born of a new creation. God reveals the life of the resurrection as nothing less than the eternal life of the trinitarian love. Here is where the world finds its definite and graciously given "end".

In the outpouring of the Spirit from the crucified Lord in his glorified humanity (i.e., with the Father), the eschatological mission of the Spirit and the time of the Church begin. What God has done in Jesus Christ representatively and concretely for all must now be universally actualized in each human person. The mission of the Spirit is to lead the world into the subjective reality ("for me") of the new life which has objectively ("once and for all") appeared in Christ.

This leads us to the next chapter of our study, in which we shall see how Balthasar understands the role of the Spirit in the Church.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CHURCH AND THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we saw how the Holy Spirit is the key to understanding the integral unity and the saving significance of the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the Spirit, the Father is able to send the Son into the world which has rejected his love and suffers the alienation and abandonment of sin and death. On the cross, the sins of the whole world are representatively carried by Christ and condemned and destroyed in his flesh. Having gone to the very end of his mission in obedience, Jesus surrenders his Spirit into the hands of the Father. Through the Holy Spirit, the Son enters into the timeless hopelessness and emptiness of Holy Saturday in the utter kenosis of obedient identification with the sin of the world, and the final death due to sin. In the resurrection of the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit, the life-in-mission of Jesus unto death on the cross is revealed to the world as the opening up of the very heart of the self-surrendering (kenotic) love of the Trinity. The end, as goal and fulfillment, of the world has begun. The Spirit of the risen Lord is sent from the Father and Son (or breathed out by the risen Lord) upon the disciples. Those whom he had called to follow him in his earthly life-in-mission, are now called and enabled to live in him through the power of the Spirit.

The new mission of the Holy Spirit is to actualize subjectively in the lives of all men and women what has been objectively accomplished once and for all by Christ. But here is exactly where the fundamental paradox of Christianity as discipleship becomes clear. How can that which God accomplished once and for all, in an absolutely unique and complete way, be subjectively realized in the lives of finite human beings? How can the Lord call men and women to follow him where no human being is able to go? And yet, this is the mystery of our faith. The absolutely unique life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for us and for our salvation, is not exclusively, but inclusively representative. The Spirit will lead the disciples, and through them, all men and women, into the full truth of the Christ event by transforming them personally into the very existence-form of Christ. Life "in Christ" through the Spirit means the possibility and the necessity of personal participation in the mission-existence of Christ. This means nothing less than personal participation in the Paschal Mystery.

This subjective realization is an analogous participation in the Christ event, where in all similarity between the Lord and the disciples by virtue of the freely given call and the freely given share in the Spirit, the ever-greater dissimilarity between the Christ event and its subjective realization in the life of the disciples must be stressed. Balthasar speaks of *Teilnahme im Abstand*.¹ The realm in which this takes place is the Church. Thus for Balthasar, the gestalt of the Church cannot

be considered apart from the unique, concrete gestalt of Jesus Christ.² Moreover, the Church is essentially united with the Christ event, and no mere "by-product" after the fact. The kenosis of the Son, beginning with the Incarnation and reaching its depth in his solidarity with the damned, is, as we said, inclusively representative; that is, from the very beginning, it is directed toward its saving, subjective realization in the lives of men and women. The Church can only be understood in its inner unity with the Christ event. Christology and Ecclesiology cannot be separated from each other.

In the present chapter, we shall attempt to see more closely just what this means. In doing so, we shall be particularly interested in seeing the specific relationship between the Spirit and the Church. The present chapter has three parts. In the first part, we shall briefly situate Balthasar's approach to Ecclesiology in recent discussion and present the main aspects of his understanding of the Church as the answer to the question, "Who is the church?" This shall help us to understand the identity and mission of the Church as mediator of the presence of Christ in the world. In the second part, we shall inquire as to the particular role of the Spirit in the ecclesial mediation of the Christ event as the transforming form of God's revelation. This will involve a consideration of (1) the objective presentation of Christ through the Spirit in sacrament, scripture, tradition and office; and (2) the subjective transformation of believers

through the Spirit active in these normative, ecclesial forms of mediation. The normative presence of the Spirit and his transformative activity in the Church raises the question concerning the absoluteness of Christianity and the catholicity of the Church. This question will be addressed in the third part of this chapter, which will conclude with a consideration of the Spirit as the fulfiller of creation.³

I. BALTHASAR'S ECCLESIOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

A. RECENT ECCLESIOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

Before we look at the relationship between the Church and the Holy Spirit, it might be helpful to situate Balthasar's approach to Ecclesiology somewhat and to present an overview of his own understanding of the Church. In a recent article, J. Peter Schineller presents a spectrum of views of current theologians with respect to the relationship between Christ and the Church.⁴ He suggests four basic categories as a help in comparing various approaches. Because of his conviction that Ecclesiology follows from one's Christology, that "the function and mission of the Church follows from the function and mission of Christ"⁵, the four categories have both a Christological and an ecclesiological component. The first and the most conservative is called the "exclusive ecclesiocentric" position. It maintains

that Jesus Christ is the only God-willed revealer of God's salvation. It is only through explicit, personal knowledge of and commitment to him that salvation is possible. This is only possible through the mediation of the Church, which is the exclusive mediation of salvation. Explicit membership in the Church is the necessary requirement for salvation. Schineller points to Jansenism and the extreme position of Father Leonard Feeney as examples.⁶

The second is called the "inclusive Christocentric" position. Such a position holds that Jesus is the constitutive mediator of salvation. He is not only normative, but indispensable. Without him, there is no salvation. However, this position does not hold that explicit knowledge of and commitment to Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation. Salvation can and does occur elsewhere, even if "anonymously", because of and through him. Turning to the role of the church, this position holds that one does not have to be explicitly Christian in order to be saved, but that mankind is only saved through the grace of Christ which is manifest and present in the Church. There is salvation *extra ecclesiam* but in some sense always *per ecclesiam*. Schineller notes two groups in this category: those theologians who consider the Church to be a constitutive mediator of grace and those who consider the Church to be more a witness to or representation of the grace which is available to everyone, and would continue to be, even if the Church should cease to exist. He mentions de Lubac and Rahner as examples of the first and Kasper and LeGuillou as examples of the second

group.⁷

The third position is called "normative theocentric". This position holds that Jesus Christ is the normative expression of God and the normative way to God and his salvation, but he is neither the exclusive nor the constitutive way. Salvation which was always possible for mankind becomes decisively and normatively manifest in Jesus. But the absence of the Christ event would not imply or result in the absence of grace, but rather in the absence of the decisive manifestation of grace. For the believer, Jesus is viewed less as an object of faith and more as a model of faith. According to this position, the Church is a sign of salvation, but not an indispensable mediator. As examples of this position, Schineller mentions Troeltsch, S. Ogden, E. TeSelle, H. Richard Niebuhr and P. Tillich.⁸

The fourth position is called "nonnormative theocentric". In this position, there are many mediators of salvation, of which Jesus is one. There are many communities of salvation, for God has no specially favored way in which we are to achieve salvation. Schineller mentions Thomas Jefferson and R. W. Emerson as examples of this position. It seems to be the position of an "enlightenment" deism, and perhaps the position of Universalist-Unitarianism.⁹

From this point of view, one can immediately say that Balthasar, with other Catholic theologians like de Lubac, Rahner, Mühlen and Küng, belongs to the second category. Both his Christology

and his Ecclesiology are constitutive. Among these theologians, there is of course considerable difference in approach and stress! In a recent study, M. Kehl has compared the Ecclesiologies of Küng, Rahner and Balthasar with respect to the institutional dimension of the Church.¹⁰ A few of his observations can help us to further situate Balthasar in the current discussion.

Kehl points out that the real basis for Küng's understanding of the Church is the pre-Easter proclamation of Jesus of the Kingdom of God.¹¹ The Church is the people called together by God in the eschatological establishment of his Kingdom. The dominant image in Küng's Ecclesiology is seen in the notion of the "people of God". It stresses the absolute sovereignty of God in the establishment of his Kingdom, and the irreducible difference between Christ and the Church.¹² Like Barth and other Protestant "kerygmatic" theologians, Küng sees the Church essentially as a Herold of the Kingdom.¹³ The Church stands totally in service to this mission of proclamation and must recognize her provisional, and even sinful, reality.¹⁴ The Church does not have any holiness of her own; she remains a Church of sinners who are called and justified by God. Kehl notes the criticisms of Congar and Balthasar, which raise the question whether the Church is something "more" than just the sum of sinful individuals called and justified by God.¹⁵ Congar, and as we shall later see, Balthasar, hold that the Church

is more than just a collection of individuals. The Church is in some sense prior to the individual believers, even though she doesn't exist apart from them. The faith of the individual believer is born of and in the faith of the Church as a whole. The Church, precisely as mediation of the salvation which has appeared in Christ, is not only Church of the sanctified, but also the sanctifying Church.¹⁶ These criticisms of Küng find him lacking an understanding of the genuine, active role of the Church as participation in the redemptive mission of Christ himself, in the mediation of God's grace. Thus Congar notes how little Küng takes up the patristic themes; for example, the Church as the new Eve, born out of the side of the crucified Christ.¹⁷ Balthasar misses the mystery dimension of the Church in its ontic union with Christ. Although one cannot merely identify Christ and the Church, still one must take seriously what it means that the Church is "in Christ" and "of Christ", and not simply an "other".¹⁸ Whereas for Küng, the chief metaphor for the Church seems to be "people of God", for Balthasar it is the "Body-Bride of Christ". In this patristic tradition, Balthasar, like de Lubac, holds that the Church, precisely in her unity with Christ, is both sanctified and sanctifying.¹⁹

In stressing the nature of the Church as the community of those justified by God, Küng provided a needed balance to Ecclesiologies before Vatican II which focused too narrowly on the institutional, hierarchical structure of the Church,

and so tended to be clerical, juridical and triumphalistic.²⁰ Balthasar however, found the sacramental-hierarchical element almost totally downplayed,²¹ and Kehl concludes that there seems to be little theological basis for the institutional structure of the Church in Küng's approach.²² It is Balthasar's central concern, however, to show that "community in grace" or life in the Spirit and hierarchical structure in the Church are not opposed. In their unity in the one Spirit, they are grounded in and point to the trinitarian gestalt of Christ's life-in-mission, and ultimately, the gestalt of the trinitarian love itself.

For Rahner, the Church is primarily the sacrament of salvation for the world.²³ By this he means that the Church is the manifestation and enduring presence of the concrete, historical salvation offered everywhere in the world in the gracious and irrevocable self-communication of God in Jesus Christ. The Church is not this grace itself: it is (only) the sacrament of this grace. There can be and is salvation where there is not yet an explicit relationship to the Church. But the Church is the clearest sign, the effective and irrevocable sign worked by God himself of his saving self-communication in Christ. In this sense, the Church is unique among all manifestations of God's saving grace. The Church is the definitive *Realsymbol* of God's self-communication to the world. It is the perceptibility of God's irrevocable "Yes" to the world as a whole. The explicit certainty of this "Yes"

to the world and to each individual is manifested only in the Church: in the confession of faith, the sacraments, the proclamation of the gospel, the infallible magisterium and in the lived holiness of the believers. Thus, although one cannot identify the Church as sign and the salvation to which it witnesses, one can say that without this ecclesial sign, salvation could not appear in the world as something final, definitive and irrevocable.²⁴

As Kehl points out, Rahner's approach is very formal. The Church is not so much the sacrament of salvation for the world because it preaches and represents Jesus Christ in his unique, concrete personality and history, but because it confesses him as the absolute mediator of salvation.²⁵ This is because Rahner develops his Christology not so much in the relationship between Jesus in his concrete mission and the Father who sends him, but as the unique high-point in the relationship between Creator and creature.²⁶ The unique newness of the concrete figure of Jesus Christ and the relationship of the believer to the historical Jesus are not so important as the explicit acceptance of Christ as the salvation always already offered by God.²⁷

We shall see how Balthasar stresses the concrete aspects of Jesus' life-in-mission, particularly the relationship of loving obedience to the Father as the revelation of God's very being and his relationship to us. Jesus is not simply God's

word of salvation to us. His concrete life, suffering, death and resurrection tell us something about the God who is saving us. This has consequences for Balthasar's understanding of the Church, its proclamation of the gospel, the sacraments, office and tradition. All these aspects are much more grounded in the concrete aspects of Jesus' life.²⁸

We should mention another theologian who has presented a systematic treatment of the Church which shows some similarity to Balthasar: H. Mühlen. We saw in Chapter One that Balthasar has adopted much of Mühlen's trinitarian theology, specifically the approach from personal categories to understand the Spirit as the "We" in person of the "I-Thou" relationship of Father and Son. In a similar vein, Mühlen approaches the question as to the identity of the Church beyond just an assembly of individual believers. Like Balthasar, his approach is an attempt to strike a balance between Christological and pneumatological perspectives in order to understand better the relationship between Christ and the Church. Mühlen holds that the Church is the mystery of the salvation history identity of the Holy Spirit in Christ and in Christians.²⁹ The Holy Spirit is one person in many persons. Our union with and in Christ is in the one Spirit. The mystery of the Church's identity comes to expression in the unique "We" that it speaks in and with Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit.³⁰

This personalistic understanding of the Church is able to go beyond the more external, juridical definition of Bellarmine³¹ and can avoid naturalistic or mystic misunderstandings possible of notions like Möhler's understanding of the Church as the "enduring" or "continuing" Incarnation.³² For Mühlen, the mystery of the Church is properly a mystery of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not a continuation of the Incarnation but the salvation history continuation of the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit.³³ Corresponding to his inner-trinitarian function, the Spirit also binds persons together in the economy of salvation: namely Christ and the many members of the Church. Through the personal categories of "I-Thou-We", Mühlen believes to be able to reinterpret what he considers to be the most durable of all images of the Church: *una mystica persona*. Thus the union of the believers with each other and with Christ is not merely juridical or organic, but in a uniquely trinitarian way, personal.³⁴

Mühlen's main concern is to avoid an incorrect identification of Christ and the Church, while at the same time guarding against a separation of the reality of the Church from Christ. For him the point of unity-in-difference is precisely the Spirit. He is the one who brings about the mystical communion which is the Church.

Balthasar agrees to a large extent with Mühlen's approach.³⁵ He has criticized Mühlen, however, for not bringing out the central Marian reality

of the Church. This is precisely where Balthasar sees the ultimate mystery of the personal identity of the Church in her responding reality. Mary is for Balthasar far more than just an image or symbol. The reality of the church's identity as responding partner, the Body-Bride of Christ, is ontically grounded in Mary's "*Fiat*". Insofar as the Church, his own Body, is a feminine--responding reality, it has its "highest, normative subjectivity in Mary".³⁶

Moreover, Balthasar notes Mühlen's rejection of the notion of an economic trinitarian inversion. Accordingly, Mühlen distinguishes the constitution of the person of Jesus in the Incarnation and his consciousness of the mission he receives in the anointing at his baptism. Balthasar understands the personal identity and the mission as uniquely identical in Jesus and as the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus Incarnation and the anointing of Jesus as the reception of a mission are not separated by Balthasar. According to Balthasar, the Church finds its identity and mission simultaneously "in Christ" by virtue of the Holy Spirit. The "I" of the Church is the "I" of the mission of Jesus Christ.³⁷

Finally, we must mention the long time friend and teacher of Balthasar, who has without a doubt had the deepest influence upon his approach to and understanding of the Church: Henri de Lubac. In his introduction to the Balthasar reader, *In der Fülle des Glaubens*, M. Kehl calls de Lubac Balthasar's "theological home".³⁸ In the same

tradition as his teacher, Balthasar's theology manifests a profound love, knowledge and continual contemplation of the ever-greater fullness of God's revelation as expressed in the fullness of the Church's tradition. It was through de Lubac that Balthasar came to know the Fathers, especially Origen. Here is where Balthasar, in contrast to Rahner, finds an understanding of the sacramental nature of the Church as a whole and of the Scriptures and the individual sacraments deeply rooted in patristic thought.³⁹

De Lubac's *Catholicisme* (1938), which Balthasar translated twice,⁴⁰ became for him the "basic book"⁴¹ of theology, the articulation of the universality (catholicity) of the Church in its truest stance of openness to receive the fullness of God's incarnate love. Balthasar's own Ecclesiology finds its deepest inspiration here. The patristic images of the Church as Body of Christ, Bride of Christ, the New Eve, and the Communion of Saints are central. The Scriptures and the Communion of Saints are seen as forms of the bodily presence of the Lord in history.

Now that we have situated Balthasar a bit in recent Ecclesiological discussion, it is time to give a brief overview of his understanding of the Church.

B. BALTHASAR'S ECCLESIOLOGY: WHO IS THE CHURCH?

The question "Who is the Church?" might seem an odd formulation. Ordinarily one might ask "What is the Church?". As we shall see, Balthasar understands the Church as a radically personal reality, and gives this a central place in his doctrine of the Church.

1. CHURCH FROM THE CROSS

The event of the Cross stands at the center of Balthasar's Ecclesiology.⁴² In the last chapter we began to speak of the Church in the context of the Paschal Mystery. It is precisely here that the Church has its origin. For Balthasar, the sending of the Spirit on Pentecost as the foundation of the Church must be understood in its inner unity with Christ's death on the cross.⁴³ It is true that one can see "beginnings" in the pre-Easter mission of Jesus. He called the disciples to be with him, to follow him and to assist him in his ministry by preaching and healing. Then, in the Eucharist before his death on the cross, he united the disciples even more intimately with himself in the reality of his flesh and blood and so "carried" them with himself into the final kenosis of the cross. These "beginnings" find their true fulfillment only in the final self-surrender of the trinitarian love on the cross.⁴⁴ Thus, while Balthasar notes that the foundation of the Church is intimately bound with the sending of the Spirit,⁴⁵ he can also insist that the kenosis

of Christ even unto death on the cross is the exact point where the Church and Christian existence in reconciliation with God originate.⁴⁶ This is because the Spirit is released from the cross.

In both Pauline and Johannine theology, the inner-relationship between the Spirit in the Church and the cross is stressed. The Church exists in the reality and power of the Spirit which is freed from the cross and poured out as the eternal love between the Father and Son in his glorified humanity. The work of the Spirit is to lead the Church ever more deeply into the mystery of the trinitarian love revealed in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, her origin and deepest reality.

Among the many images for the Church, the patristic theme of the Church's origin from the pierced side of the crucified Lord occupies a central place in Balthasar's Ecclesiology. The opened side of Christ lays bare the heart of the trinitarian love. The Church is born of the "extreme love"⁴⁷ of God for the world, poured out in blood and water, the sacraments of the Church.⁴⁸ This is already the conviction of *John* where the piercing of the side of Christ and the outpouring of blood and water from his heart are to be understood in the essential unity of the blood-water-Spirit symbolism.⁴⁹ Biblically the heart is the true center of the whole spiritual-corporeal reality of the human person. The surrender of the Spirit and the eucharistic outpouring of blood and water are seen together as the total surrender of Jesus'

inner being, the opening of the inner trinitarian love for the world.⁵⁰ As Balthasar reads *John*, therefore, the surrender of Jesus' Spirit and the eucharistic sharing of his bodily substance on the cross have a trinitarian-ecclesiological meaning and must be seen together with the sending of the Spirit of the risen Lord on Pentecost (or Easter) as a unity.

...indem er am Kreuz in äußerster Schwäche seinen Geist aushaucht, vermag er auch an Ostern seinen Geist in die Kirche einzuhauchen... Die Kirche und der Christ sind gewiß das Produkt dieser einzigen Zeugekraft am Kreuz. 51

In the theology of the Johannine writings, Spirit, blood and water are thus seen as a unity. They are a three-fold witness to the unique love which has appeared in the Incarnate Son and, so Balthasar, undoubtedly understood sacramentally. They are symbols of the inner reality of the Church.⁵² For Balthasar, then, the Church has its origin essentially on the cross and represents the creative "achievement" and fruit of the representative suffering and death of the Lord.

Only after Jesus in kenotic obedience completes his mission to the very end in the eucharistic outpouring (*Verflüssigung*) of his total being on the cross, only after he surrenders the Spirit which he possessed without measure into the hands of the Father, can the promised Spirit be released and breathed out into the disciples in order to

lead them, and through them the world, into the full reality of the kenotic love which has appeared in Jesus Christ. The Church does not simply arise "after" the life and mission of Jesus, but arises out of the unique, absolute self-surrender of the Lord himself.

Die Öffnung des Herzens ist Hergabe des Innersten und Persönlichsten zu öffentlichem Gebrauch; der offene, entleerte Raum ist für alle betretbar... Der (neue) Tempel ebenso wie die neu eröffnete trinkbare Quelle weisen auf Gemeinschaft: der hingegebene Leib ist der Ort der neuen Bundesstiftung, der neuen Gemeindesammlung: Raum, Altar, Opfer, Mahl, Gemeinde und deren Geist zugleich. 53

One could formulate this more pointedly and say that the Church does not merely arise because of what Jesus did on the cross. The Church arises from the personal reality of Christ himself, from the "self" which is surrendered on the cross. This means that one cannot understand the identity or role of the Church in mediating the Christ event in a merely functional way. The Church can mediate the Christ event precisely insofar as the Church itself is born of the inner, personal reality of Christ surrendered to the world.

As much as Balthasar stresses this, it cannot mean that the Church is personally identical with Christ.⁵⁴ In trying to determine the identity of the Church in its relation to Christ, one must keep two things in mind. The Church is neither simply personally identical with

Christ; nor is the Church merely an "other" which exists in personal independence or isolation from him.⁵⁵ Put positively, one could say that there are two essential moments in the identity of the Church in its relationship to Christ. First, the Church is born completely out of the outpoured divine-human reality of Christ on the cross. As such, the Church is the remaining presence of Christ in the world, Christ still alive in the world.⁵⁶ Secondly, the Church is the community of human beings for whom the Lord surrendered his life on the cross, those who are led into the full reality of the Christ event by being transformed personally into the gestalt of Christ. As such, the Church is indeed an "other" vis-a-vis Christ.⁵⁷

From the many biblical images which are themselves expressions of the first theological attempts to come to terms with this paradox, Balthasar prefers to speak of the Church as the Body of Christ on the one hand and as the Bride of Christ on the other. Both of these images express the unity and difference between Christ and the Church--with slightly different accents.

a. The Church as the Body of Christ

As the Body of Christ, born out of the eucharistic self-surrender of Jesus on the cross, the Church has no reality or identity of its own in isolation from Christ its head. Whatever "personality" or

reality the Church may have comes from Christ, whose fullness she is, precisely because he poured out his fullness into her. Even more, he poured out his own fullness precisely as Church.⁵⁸ The Church arises out of the most intimate personal reality of Christ, out of his humanity sacrificed on the cross.⁵⁹ She is an "extension", "communication", "elongation" of Christ;⁶⁰ "function and elongation of the Incarnation of the Word of God".⁶¹ The Church is the "place of the continued enfleshment of God in the world"⁶² and of its completion in the lives of believers.⁶³

Paul, and the Fathers after him, stressed that the Church has no reality of its own apart from Christ its head. She is not a new, second person apart from him. Nonetheless, the distinction is made between Christ, who as head, does not need the Church to be a person, and the Church, which cannot exist as a "body" without Christ, its "head". She receives all that she is as body as pure grace from Christ the head.

b. The Church as the Bride of Christ

It seems clear that while the distinction body-head expresses the real difference between Christ and the Church, the image of the Church as the Body of Christ, especially when understood as a "continuation" of the Incarnation, tends to lead to an identification between the Church and Christ. Paul himself was aware of this problem and tried with

the image of the Church as the Bride of Christ to emphasize the difference-in-union between the two.⁶⁴ This image plays a central role in Balthasar's Ecclesiology. Following *Ephesians 3*, the heart of Balthasar's understanding of the Church, the personal difference between Christ and the Church can be brought out in terms of Paul's image of the masculine-feminine nature of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The Church is not identical with Christ, her Bridegroom. She is in some sense another "person" or subject.⁶⁵ She is the one for whom Christ surrenders himself out of love. In this sense, she already exists in some sense before Christ's kenosis: as the sinful humanity so loved by God that he surrenders his only Son unto death on the cross.⁶⁶ For Balthasar, this sinful humanity seems to be present in the event of the cross precisely in the humanity of Christ.

...ob im Gekreuzigten, stellvertretend Sterbenden ein Moment der präexistierenden sündigen Menschheit so gegenwärtig gedacht werden muß, daß sie als ein irgendwie Zweites in diese Kirchenschöpfung und- ergießung miteinfließt. 67

One immediately thinks of the theme of the adulterous bride in the Prophets: the condemnation of the adultery of Jerusalem and the promise of the Lord Jahwe to come and rescue the bride of his youth from her sins, purify her and betroth her to himself again in faithfulness.

c. The Church as the New Eve

This leads us to the image much loved by the Fathers of the Church as the new Eve, born out of the side of the second Adam on the cross. The bride which he carries in himself and in some sense, therefore, "pre-exists", is someone whom he loves and for whom he dies. But in his death on the cross, the new Eve is born, not as the sinful humanity which he carried with him, but as the glorious, virginal bride without spot or wrinkle.⁶⁸

The two images, the Church as the Body of Christ and the Church as the Bride of Christ, actually come together in the image of the New Eve. In terms of *Genesis*, while created out of Adam's own flesh and bone, Eve is nonetheless given to him by God as a truly unique "person" capable, precisely by her "otherness", of entering into a true relationship with him. In this sense, so Balthasar, the Church "pre-exists" in Christ (in whom the whole world is created) and is born from his humanity offered in death on the cross. Balthasar calls the Church an "objectification of Christ".⁶⁹ She is created from the very substance of the second Adam: everything in her essential structure is formed out of Christ's inner reality. She embodies the significance of his coming, his existence and personal reality. She is a true replica (*Nachbild*) of his humanity, a being in which Christ recognizes himself. Nonetheless, like Eve, the Church as another "person" is not identical with him, out of whom she was taken.

She is capable of entering, in her otherness, into a genuinely personal relationship with Christ.⁷⁰ Christ, in the terms of *Genesis*, leaving Father and Mother, clings to her in order to become one body, one flesh with her.

Pursuing the imagery of *Genesis* further, the nature of the Church as Christ's partner can be highlighted. Insofar as the Son in his divine mission is truly human, he must have the "helper" or "bride" in which he at last recognizes "flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone"--which, in the natural order, he "needs" as a man. Insofar as the Son in his mission is directed to the whole of humanity, this bride and helper will not be merely a single individual human subject, but the Church. This takes place, according to Balthasar, in a way that preserves and respects the order of creation, but at the same time goes essentially beyond it, since as God's Son, he allows the "other" who will "complete" him to arise out of his own divine substance.⁷¹

He really needs the Church as his bride and helper. First, because the self-surrender of God in love must be recognized and accepted if it is to be fruitful. Secondly, Christ "needs" the Church especially as the one who, when he is no longer present on earth in the historical gestalt of Jesus, can re-present him and carry out his mission.⁷² This will be important for understanding the Church's real participation in Christ's saving work by virtue of his inclusively representative death and resurrection.⁷³

d. Marital Union-in-Difference: Masculine-Feminine

For Balthasar, these two images represent two irreducible aspects of the Church's identity. The image of the Church as the Body of Christ stresses the incarnational, corporeal identity in the relationship. The image of the Church as the Bride of Christ stresses the "personal-differentiating" moment of the relationship.⁷⁴ These two aspects must be seen in their dialectical unity. Balthasar finds this best expressed in the image of marriage.⁷⁵ As a "sign of salvation", it unites three essential characteristics of the relationship between Christ and the Church: first, the real difference of persons, precisely as required for a marriage relationship of love; secondly, the real unity of body and spirit because of the eucharistic origin of the Church in the surrender of Christ's inner substance on the cross; finally, the irreducible difference of function of the persons in this union. The Church as feminine receives all that she is from Christ as man. Without him, she is nothing.⁷⁶ As J. Fessio notes: "In the bridal relation between Christ and his Church, the highest form of personal subjectivity and personal union is reached, a real union of flesh, blood and spirit that preserves the personal opposition of the Church to Christ and of the members among themselves".⁷⁷

The bride which arises from the wounded side of the new Adam, and which is therefore his body, is both the "One" (Christ) and the "Other" (the

one facing Christ) in a dependence and freedom for which there is really no adequate human image.⁷⁸ In the human marriage relationship, two independent persons come together and become one flesh. The Church, however, is never "independent" from Christ, even as the sinful humanity for which he died. The Church is Christ's Bride precisely insofar as she is his Body, informed by her head, and so enabled to serve as his handmaid.⁷⁹ The passage from bodily unity to bridal partnership is a mystery which cannot be pinned down, and which is ultimately grounded in the Trinity.⁸⁰

Ja nicht einmal dieses Geheimnis des Übergangs läßt sich festlegen, weil sich Christus von der Trinität nicht scheiden läßt und das, was in der Intimität von ihm zur Kirche übergeht, das ganze dreieinige Leben in Mitteilung ist. 81

e. The Holy Spirit: Trinitarian Hierarchy

The union between Christ and the Church and the union of all believers in the Church in Christ (*Eph 4, 4-5*) is precisely the unity of the Spirit (*Eph 4, 3*). The life of the Spirit is the ever-greater life of the triune God, so that the Church is not only the fullness of Christ, but also the form and form-giver of the trinitarian love which has poured itself out into the world.⁸² In the final analysis, says Balthasar, the Bride-Church is (1) union-in-opposition with Christ the Bridegroom and therein (2) representative of

the opposition between humanity in general as creature and God as Creator. The opposition in the Church between creature and Creator is, however, superseded, overcome and perfected insofar as she is led into the mystery of the inner-trinitarian union-in-opposition.⁸³ Thus Balthasar's Ecclesiology is firmly rooted in the mystery of the Trinity: real unity in the opposition of persons.

Das ist Erfüllung...die sich doch nur herleiten kann aus dem höchsten Bezirk der trinitarischen, geistig-personalen Oppositionen in der Identität. ...so wird auch die Opposition Christus (Bräutigam)-- Kirche (Braut) umgriffen und getragen von der Identität des einen Christus Haupt und Leib, der als Christus totus für Augustin "Eine Person" ist und für Paulus *heis*. 84

Consequently, it is clear why, for Balthasar, the Church as a personal reality is specifically the work of the Holy Spirit, who is a divine person precisely as the loving union of Father and Son: unity and union precisely as the attestation of eternal opposition.⁸⁵ The Holy Spirit is the "Seal of Identity" in love, pressed into the unity Christ-Church unto the depths of that opposition which rejects all identification, because in it, the dissimilarity is ever-greater than the similarity: the opposition between creature and Creator.

Kraft dieser seiner göttlichen coincidentia oppositorum begründet er ((der Geist)) jenes

"Andere", die Braut, das doch als solches das "Eine", der Leib, ist, schafft aus dem Einssein des "Geistes Christi" in allen Gläubigen das "Gegenübersein" aus dem gleichen Geist Christi heraus. 86

The masculine-feminine structure of the relationship between Christ and the Church is ultimately grounded in the hierarchical structure of the Trinity.⁸⁷ It expresses the fact that in the bridal union between God and the creature, the Church is essentially a receiver and responder and can, therefore, never simply identify herself with Christ. She is constituted in the surrender of God's innermost being on the cross, and exists only as the receiver of the divine life poured into her. Balthasar sees this as an analogy to the trinitarian kenosis of the Father into the Son. The Father as the infinite source of divine life is "greater" than the Son who, as the Son, receives all that he is from the Father. The analogy contains, of course, the "ever-greater" dissimilarity! The hierarchical differentiation of persons in the Trinity exists within the indivisible unity of the one divine being or nature, while the hierarchical relationship between Christ and the Church exists within the irreducible difference between creature and Creator.

2. STRUCTURE IN THE CHURCH: MARY, JOHN, PETER

In the previous section we saw how central the

image of marriage is in Balthasar's Ecclesiology. It is able to express both the unity between Christ and the Church as Body of Christ, and the remaining difference between Christ and the Church which was stressed in the image of the Church as Bride of Christ. Finally, Balthasar sees the specific structure or hierarchy of this union-in-difference expressed analogously in the sexual difference between man and woman. Not only is the relationship between Christ and the Church one of unity-in-difference, but it is specifically an hierarchical relationship in which Christ (as man) bestows his inner substance and the Church (as woman) receives all that she is from him. For Balthasar, the relationship between Christ and the Church is therefore an analogous, economic expression of the trinitarian structure of divine love. The Spirit, the eternal "We" of the loving union in personal difference of the Father and Son is the economic "We" of the loving union-in-difference between Christ and the community of believers. In this sense, the Holy Spirit can be called the inner life or soul of the Church.

The reality of the Church as the adequate and effective mediation of immediacy (union-in-difference) between Christ and individual believers does not exclude, but rather presupposes structure.⁸⁸

Balthasar distinguishes three levels (*Ebenen*) in the Church.⁸⁹ The first and highest level is "above" the visible, hierarchical structure of the Church (*Überamtlich*): the personal reality of the Church prior to its form in word, sacrament,

tradition and office. This level finds its expression in Mary as *Realsymbol*. The second is the hierarchical-sacramental level (*amtlich*): the structural reality of the Church in word, sacrament, tradition and office. This level finds its expression in Peter. The third is a level "below" the hierarchical (*unteramtlich*): the concrete level of Christian life as union in love of the saints. This level finds its symbolic expression in John, the Beloved Disciple.

a. The Marian Reality of the Church

The first level is the ground of the Church's eternal and historical constitution where she comes into being as Body-Bride of Christ and where she becomes a source of life in faith for others as Virgin Mother. According to Balthasar, this "ground" in which the Church is rooted is nothing other than the Incarnation of the Son--and all that it implies: the descent of God into the flesh of the Virgin Mary and into his own flesh. The utterly free "Yes" of God to his creation, even in its rejection of his love, meets the perfectly adequate, divinely prepared "Yes" of Mary.⁹⁰ Because of Mary's utter readiness and disponability, the Son can become man, the divine love can actually enter the world. Because Mary is so chosen by God and empowered through Christ's unique salvific "Yes" to the Father's will (as the new Eve taken from the side of Christ on the cross), the Incarnation is from the beginning

a "bridal, ecclesial mystery".⁹¹ Even more, because Mary is chosen to represent humanity in her "Yes", the Marian *Fiat* is not only the bridal womb in which the Son of God himself is born, but also the place where the Son can establish the universal Church.⁹² As such, her "Yes" is also the perfect, unsurpassable, all-encompassing form of the inner life of faith of the Church.⁹³

Mary is called in this way to play a unique and central role in salvation. Through the grace of the cross, in the power of Christ's divine "Yes" to the Father, she is chosen and enabled "in advance" to receive and mediate the redemptive fruit of the cross. This unique act is for Balthasar the subjective foundation which makes possible and carries the faith response of the Church as a whole and the faith response of each individual within the Church.⁹⁴ In a certain sense, says Balthasar, the Church has its beginnings in the chamber of Nazareth.⁹⁵

In Mary, the Church is the "glorious bride without flaw or blemish" worthy of Christ her bridegroom.⁹⁶ Balthasar speaks of the "Marian principle" which radically characterizes the Church. It is no mere abstract ideal, but in Mary, a personal reality.⁹⁷ The Church born out of Christ finds its personal center and actualization in Mary as the one who, in a womanly receiving way, through God's grace and the over-shadowing of the Holy Spirit, was able to correspond perfectly to the masculine "subjectivity" of Christ. She is not the Word, but she is the adequate response to the Word

which God expects and needs from his creation, if the Word and the divine life it brings are actually to be received.⁹⁸

Thus, it is clear that for Balthasar, Mary is not merely a symbol of the general response or receiving nature of the posture of the creature before God. Nor is the Marian Church merely a collection of such responses. Mary's unique mission in salvation history, as the one "full of grace" is to be the perfect form of response (*Antwortgestalt*) which God needs if the divine love is to appear in the world. The Church, with Mary as its real, living center, is the partner which the Lord needs so that the glory of the divine love which has appeared in the Christ event can be universally recognized and accepted for what it truly is. Under the cross, the Marian Church is called to a real participation in Christ's work of redemption, a bodily-spiritual fruitfulness with and in Christ.⁹⁹

In the mystery of this union made possible by the obedient *Fiat* of Mary, the Church is the place where God can continue to take on flesh in this world and so bring the work of redemption to completion.¹⁰⁰ The Church receives all that she is from Christ through the qualitatively unique *Fiat* of Mary and continues to be formed in her inner reality and structure by this all-encompassing Marian disponability in faith.¹⁰¹ By virtue of this Marian constitution, the Church is the virgin mother of many children in faith, the mediatrix of the divine life which has come into the world

through Christ.

Here again we see the inner unity of Christology and Ecclesiology (Mariology) which is so characteristic of Balthasar. All grace which comes into the world through Christ, which therefore has Christological-incarnational form, also has a Marian-ecclesial dimension, precisely because God freely accomplishes the Incarnation through Mary's *Fiat*. Just as the Holy Spirit is the essential divine and personal continuity between Jesus Christ and his pre- and post-history, so too is Mary in the power of the same Spirit the essential human and personal point of continuity between the trinitarian Christ event and the world and its history.¹⁰² For Balthasar, the over-shadowing of the Virgin Mary and the outpouring of the Spirit in the Church are understood as a unity.¹⁰³ This is not at all surprising. Heavily influenced by the Fathers, Balthasar's understanding of redemption and sanctification is strongly incarnational. God redeems and saves the world by assuming it, taking flesh in it, beginning with and continuing in the humanity of Christ and his enduring presence in the Church.

As we shall see, the actualization of the sacraments and the formation of the scriptures are also understood from this incarnational, Marian perspective: it is the work proper to the Holy Spirit, in analogy to the actualization of the conception of the Son in Mary's womb.¹⁰⁴ It is one and the same Marian *Fiat* which God creates for the Incarnation of the Son and which he needs for

the continuation and completion of the Incarnation in history.¹⁰⁵

In the constitutive "Yes" of Mary, the Church exists "before" or "above" the faith response of the individual believers. In its subjective-objective holiness in Mary, the Marian Church is the foundation for the possibility of faith and remains the criterion and common point of contact for the efforts of individual, imperfect Christians.¹⁰⁶

This might be a good place to recall the reality of sin in the Church. Thus far, we have seen a very "idealistic" understanding of the Church! Balthasar does not deny that the Church is and remains a Church of sinners.¹⁰⁷ Quite the contrary. The archetypal holiness of the Church is no mere "ideal", but it is a subjective reality only in the Marian dimension of the Church: personally in Mary and in the saints. As such, the holiness of the Church, real and present in its Marian center, is nonetheless an eschatological reality.¹⁰⁸ The holiness of the Church is definitively established and present in Mary, but we believers, who are not Mary but sinners, must be led ever more deeply into her perfect response of faith.¹⁰⁹

b. The Petrine and Johannine Dimensions of the Church

Once the essentially feminine, receptive character of the Church has been established, Balthasar describes two other levels within the Church: the hierarchical-sacramental level and the level of the laity, the communion of saints. Within the irreducible feminine dimension of the Marian Church in its relation to Christ as its Head and Bridegroom¹¹⁰ one can attribute a relatively "masculine" role to the level of the hierarchy and sacrament, and a relatively "feminine" role to the level of the laity. Balthasar understands the contrast masculine-feminine as the relationship between forming-mediating activity and receptive passiveness.¹¹¹

Beide Stände sind vom Herrn einander zugestaltet, sie wurzeln im gemeinsamen Muttergrund der Kirche, und näherhin noch im gemeinsamen sakramentalen Grund des königlich-prophetischen Priestertums, worauf sich dann einerseits das hierarchische Amt als Spender und Verwalter von Wahrheit und Gnade, anderseits das laikale geistige Priestertum als Empfänger (um weiterzugeben!) und Verwirklicher des Empfangenen in der Sphäre des christlichen Lebens erhebt. 112

In this sense, everything to do with structure in the Church exists in and solely to mediate the foundational Marian bridal mystery of the Church (the communion in the trinitarian love) to individual believers, intact and untouched by human limitation and sin. The Church cannot do

this of her own power, but solely because Christ himself establishes hierarchical structure in the Church as ministry to word and sacrament, empowering it to represent him, sharing in his own mission and authority. The divinely instituted¹¹³ structure of the Church in word, sacrament and office is the mediator and safeguard of the divine life communicated to the world in the Christ event until the end of time.¹¹⁴

The sacraments are the guarantee of Christ that the grace of his Incarnation is always available in its divine fullness unchanged, unreduced, uncompromised by human deficiencies. Hierarchy or office in the Church in apostolic tradition is the guarantee that the full truth of Christ can be communicated intact.¹¹⁵ Balthasar speaks of office and sacrament as forms of impregnation, which is to say that they have a relatively masculine role vis-a-vis the feminine passive-receptive role of the individual believer in the communication of God's grace.¹¹⁶ This does not mean that the hierarchical-sacramental level and its representatives are better or more important than the level of Christian life and the laity. Balthasar wishes to distinguish between real but relative differentiations in the life of the Church as a whole.¹¹⁷

The hierarchical structure of office in the Church symbolized by Peter, is instituted by the Incarnate Son as a necessarily masculine representation of Christ's own presence and authority in the Church.¹¹⁸

Balthasar stresses, however, that this is true in the Church, within the all-embracing, Marian dimension. That is, Peter, and all ecclesial office holders, exercise their office as a particular form of the underlying Marian *Fiat* to the will of God. Therefore, authentic exercise of office must be an expression of Marian love and obedience to the Spirit. Authority and love, both anchored in the Spirit, cannot be isolated from each other in the Church.¹¹⁹

Moreover, the passive-feminine role of the individual believer in relation to the official forms of the ecclesial mediation of the mystery of Christ is anything but lack of activity or interest. The specifically feminine reality of woman as vessel or womb corresponds naturally and spiritually to the potency of the man, which apart from the woman, would be meaningless. The reception of the man is part of a single whole, an act of love, in which she as receiver is just as "active" as the man, but in a specifically feminine way. Her carrying of the seed and her giving birth are the goal of the union and the real proof of how "active" her receiving, "passive" role was. In this vein, Balthasar suggests that one might more correctly emphasize the primacy of the feminine role of the laity. It mirrors more directly the basic Marian reality of the Church as a whole, while the structural, mediating level of the hierarchy functions only as an instrumental cause directed to the final end, which is the actual reception and actualization of divine life in the *Communio*.¹²⁰

Balthasar also attempts to illustrate the relationship of these two levels from a trinitarian perspective. The relationship between masculine communication and feminine reception as descriptive of the relationship between these two levels in the Church can be compared with the relationship between the Father and Son in the earthly existence of the Incarnate Son. In the economic "trinitarian inversion" the love of the Father took on an "objective", "normative" form through the Spirit and the absolute freedom of the Son took on the form of absolutely receptive obedience. These two dimensions are one in the unity of the Spirit of love. In the time of the Church, the Spirit also has the "tendency toward form".¹²¹ In an analogous way, the clerical and lay levels of the Church are interrelated and not opposed. The structural reality of the Church can be understood as the objectification in the Spirit of the subjective love of Christ for the Church. The Holy Spirit, in the form of the Church as Body-Bride of Christ and in the specific inner-ecclesial forms of mediation (word, sacrament, tradition, office, canon law) makes present the form of Christ, the gracious, "objective" presence of the saving event of salvation. As such, the concrete forms of the hierarchical-sacramental level are incarnational: "crystallizations" of the divine trinitarian love, irrevocably communicated by God in the Christ event and directed toward the subjective realization of this union in love in the lives of the individual believers.¹²²

Therefore, everything to do with structure in the

Church is relativized by its mediating character. It must strive for a certain transparency. It is not something of worth in and for itself. The sphere of personal realization of the divine love in the lives of individual believers is clearly the real center of the Church as Communion of Saints. It is false to view the hierarchical-sacramental structure of the Church as its real "essence" and the realm of the laity as a merely analogous extension.¹²³ Rather, the hierarchical, Petrine dimension exists as pure service in fostering love among the faithful, the Johannine dimension, as the mediation of the bridal union between Christ and the Church, the all-encompassing Marian dimension.

Ohne diese Auswirkung des Geistes Christi in den Gliedern, *rein* durch objektive, sakramentale und amtliche Wirkungen, wird im Leibe Christi nichts ausgerichtet und aufgebaut: alles Objektive und Amtliche ist nur Unterbau, Anlaß und Mittel, um die subjektive Form Christi in den Christen zum Durchbruch zu bringen. 124

c. Communion of Saints--Church of Sinners

For Balthasar, the interrelation of these three levels is especially important when one considers the factual sinfulness of the Church. The Church in her official ministry of service through word, sacrament and office, is marked by the sign of the cross precisely because of the factual discrepancy between the objective holiness of the

Church as a whole and the sinfulness of her individual members. The sinfulness of believers has always been a temptation to divide the Church into an "authentic" Church of the saints and an "inauthentic" Church of sinners. The history of the Church shows from the very beginning how such thinking has led to schism, destruction of the unity of the Church. Balthasar stresses with the Fathers that the Church is a unity, both in her essential holiness and in her visible sinfulness. This unity is grounded in the fundamental Marian holiness of the Church. The perfect response of Mary is, however, manifested in the members of the Church analogously, according to the degree to which faith, hope and love are truly actualized. Balthasar describes the unity of the Church in the tension between "authentic" and "inauthentic" life in the Spirit as "unity-in-analogy".¹²⁵

This is especially problematic in the case of the sinfulness of those who serve and present the Church in office. Here the temptation is strong to divide the Church into the true "Church of the saints" and to see the "official, institutional Church" as something empty and hollow. But can one play off love and authority in the Church against each other? Not according to Balthasar.¹²⁶ Following Augustine's teaching of the reality of the truly loving Church, the immaculate dove of the *Song of Songs*, the Bride of Christ and the Communion in love of the Saints, Balthasar stresses that the Church can only function in her ministry of reconciliation in love if--and in fact, because--she is already always one in love with

Christ, and so, as his Body-Bride, always already truly a Church of love, despite human sinfulness. Only insofar as the Church is thus constituted from the very beginning as union with and in Christ, is she given the power to forgive sins and to lead men and women into union with Christ through Baptism, to celebrate the Eucharist and to infallibly proclaim the Gospel.¹²⁷

The ministry of the hierarchical-sacramental Church and its sinful ministers has meaning only because it is anchored in the Marian reality of the Church in the identity of objectively bestowed grace and subjectively actualized holiness.¹²⁸ According to Balthasar, the saints, those in whom the objective-subjective reality of the Church in Mary has become a personal reality, have a special mission to help the Church withstand the contradiction between its constitutive holiness and its factual sinfulness. Symbolized by the Beloved Disciple John, the saints play a mediating role in love so as to prevent the Petrine hierarchy from falling out of the reality of the Church's fundamental Marian holiness. Thus the Johannine dimension of the Church, manifested in the holiness of the laity as the true actualization of the Church's Marian holiness, supports the hierarchical-sacramental ministry.

Die *wahrhaft* johanneische Kirche ist nicht die "dritte", "geistige" Kirche nach der petrinischen und paulinischen, sondern jene, die anstelle Petri

unter dem Kreuz steht, um dort für ihn die marianische Kirche in Empfang zu nehmen. 129

Of course, this does not mean that holiness is not to be found or expected in the hierarchy! Quite the opposite. The saints are gifts from God, raised up as a source of power and inspiration. They bring the challenge that the Church in its ministry subjectively actualize what it officially proclaims and celebrates. They embody the challenge formulated in the liturgy of ordination where the ordinands are admonished to consider what they do, to imitate what they perform and to place their lives under the sign of the cross. Office and lived discipleship cannot be separated.

II. THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH: OBJECTIVE REPRESENTATION AND SUBJECTIVE REALIZATION OF THE FORM OF GOD'S REVELATION IN THE CHRIST EVENT

INTRODUCTION

In Part I of this chapter, we were able to present a general description of the central reality of the Church as Balthasar sees it. We saw how he speaks of three interrelated levels or dimensions in the Church: the personal Marian dimension of her reality in the bridal union with Christ, which is temporally and ontically prior to the union between each individual believer and Christ; the objective hierarchical Petrine dimension as the enduring, economic mediating form of the Christ event; and the subjective Johannine dimension of concrete community life as the actualization of the Christ event in the lives of the believers.

In Part II, we wish to take a closer look at the mediating role of the Holy Spirit in these last two areas: in the objective representation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of the Christ event as the concrete form of God's revelation (*Offenbarungsgestalt*) and in the subjective transformation of the believer into the gestalt of Christ as life "in Christ" or life "in the Spirit". As we have previously noted, one cannot separate these two dimensions from one another. They are two moments of the single, transforming mystery of redemption

in Jesus Christ.

A. OBJECTIVE FORM IN THE CHURCH

1. INCARNATIONAL MEDIATION

God's free self-revelation as kenotic self-surrender assumes concrete gestalt in the person of Jesus Christ. In his personal mission-existence, culminating in the Paschal Mystery, God reveals to the world who he truly is: absolutely self-surrendering, trinitarian love. In its uniqueness, it shows itself to be absolute, and so, divine love, precisely as "powerless" and "self-surrendering". This is for Balthasar the true *id quo maius cogitari nequit*. And yet, the divine love--because it is love--does not enter into the world in the concrete gestalt of Jesus Christ in order simply to be contemplated in and for itself. The person-in-mission of Jesus Christ is not only the form as expression of the divine love, but also the informing power as impression of the divine love in the hearts of human beings. The divine love assumes form in Jesus Christ in order that it might continue to in-form and trans-form others. As Balthasar points out time and again in his theological aesthetics, *Herrlichkeit*, the recognition of the concrete form of revelation in Jesus Christ (*Erblickung*) is always directed to the transformation effected by the inner power of the concrete form

of revelation (*Entrückung*).¹

In this way, the real significance and saving power of the concrete form of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ comes to light in its transformative activity in the community of believers, the Church. The Church is the mediation of the form of God's revelation in Christ to all men and women throughout history. Scripture and sacrament are the fundamental ecclesial forms of this mediation. Here is where the risen Lord is present and active in his Spirit.

We have already seen that Balthasar's Ecclesiology is very incarnational. The Church, while never fully identified with Christ, is seen (as Body-Bride) to be an extension, an elongation, and even completion of the Incarnation. Just as the Son assumed concrete form in the world in the womb of the Virgin, so too, Christ continues to assume concrete form in the world in the Church.

Balthasar speaks of *Gestaltwerdung Christi in der Welt* and *Gestaltwerdung Christi in der Menschheit und im Einzelmenschen*.² The concrete forms of mediation in the Church, scripture and the sacraments, are also seen in this incarnational perspective. Balthasar is fundamentally influenced by the teaching of the *corpus triforme*, a theme dominant in the theology of the Alexandrine Fathers, especially Origen.³

This teaching spoke of three concrete, interrelated forms in which the eternal Logos takes on flesh in the world. The Incarnation of the Word in

the womb of the Virgin Mary is the first form. It continues in the social body of the Church and in the written body of the scriptures. The visible social community of the Church as a whole in its eucharistic communion and the written form of the scriptures serve as bodily symbols through which the Incarnate, eternal Word is truly present. These three modes of the Word's presence can be distinguished, but cannot be separated.⁴ The incarnate presence of the Word in sacrament and in the scriptures is founded in, and is a continuation of, its presence in the earthly body of Jesus. All three modes must be integrated as aspects of a single, total incarnational form (*Menschwerungsform*).⁵

In Passion und Eucharistie des erlösungsvollziehenden Fleisches wird nach rückwärts offenbar, was die Gestalt des historischen Jesus war, wird aber nach vorwärts verständlich, was die Gestalt des "Christus des Glaubens" sein würde: bezeugende Schrift und bezeugende Gemeinde: beides in einem. 6

Together these three modes constitute the one mystery of God's self-communication. Both word and sacrament as bodily modes of the Incarnate Word's presence point beyond themselves to the all-encompassing mode of the Lord's presence in the Church, his mystical Body.⁷ The Church, concretely shaped through these forms of mediation, is not merely a "product" or result of God's redemptive act in Jesus Christ, but primarily the on-going event of redemption by virtue of the

dynamic, transforming power of the *Christusgestalt* in word and sacrament.⁸ Precisely as continuing modes of the Incarnation, of the real, bodily presence of the eternal Word, the scriptures and sacraments are primarily the work of the Holy Spirit.⁹

First we shall consider the Church as sacrament and the sacraments of the Church. Then we shall turn our attention to the scriptures.

2. SACRAMENTAL FORM

We have already seen how Balthasar attempts to answer the question concerning the identity of the Church by considering the fundamental relationship between the Church and the person of Jesus Christ. Balthasar stresses the personal union-in-difference between Christ and the Marian bridal Church. While the Church cannot be simply identified with Christ, who remains her head and Lord, still she has no reality, no form of her "own" apart from him. Of its very essence, the Church is born out of the inner personal reality of the crucified Lord, poured out in his Spirit, and can have no self-sufficient reality or meaning apart from him. She is one body, one flesh with him. Therefore, the Church is truest to her "own" reality when she is most truly transparent for the reality of Christ.¹⁰ The Church is an objectification of Christ.¹¹

a. The Church as Sacrament

It is in this context that Balthasar sees the Church as a whole as a sacramental reality. It makes present the gestalt of Jesus Christ, himself the *Ursakrament*¹² or *Gesamtsakrament*¹³ of the presence of God in the world, the "corporeal and definitive Word of salvation from God to humanity".¹⁴

Just as the Word became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ to reveal, not himself, but the Father's self-surrendering love¹⁵ and in this sense, is in his entire divine-human reality THE sacrament of God,¹⁶ so too the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ, his "elongation",¹⁷ is a sacrament insofar as it exists solely to mediate¹⁸ and actualize in men and women of all time the saving love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, out of whom she is born and constituted.¹⁹ Thus Balthasar speaks of the Church as the *Ur-sakrament inmitten der Welt*,²⁰ as the *Gesamtsakrament*,²¹ as "the sacrament of the presence of Christ within her"²² or as "the instituted sacrament of Christ".²³

The sacramental reality of the Church as a whole and the individual sacraments, together with everything that pertains to form and structure as mediating realities, are for Balthasar strictly christological-pneumatological realities. They can be understood only in relation to the gestalt of Jesus Christ which they make present in history through the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁴

The Church is a sacramental reality precisely as mediating gestalt.

Das Grundgesetz für alles Sakramental-Gestalthafte in der Kirche ist damit schon erkannt. Es liegt darin, daß alle sichtbare Gestaltung von Seiten der Kirche, die die Sakramente verwaltet, in ihrem Wie und Inwieweit von dem Ereignis bestimmt wird, das darin vergegenwärtigt werden soll und selber die Urgestalt aller Offenbarung und somit auch das Ursakrament ist. Nichts an der Kirche, sogar sie selber nicht, kann eine die Christusgestalt konkurrenzierende, sie gar ersetzende Eigengestalt beanspruchen. 25

This text makes it clear that the sacramental reality of the Church has two important aspects. First, the Church is truly the genuine and effective mediation of the Christ event in history. She is far more than just a pointer, a sign, or a herold. She certainly is all this, and will, like John the Baptist, always point to Christ. But the mission and identity of the Church is not to point to a past event. The Church, as the work of the Holy Spirit is the very presence and mediation here and now of the Christ event. The Church is the Body of Christ. Secondly, the Church, as the concrete, visible gestalt, which is at once the work and the mediation of the Spirit of the Living Christ, is not an end in itself. The Church is only a sacrament.²⁶ This means that she is not the Spirit of God's ever-greater love, but only the mediation of it. Ecclesial form and structure which follow from her sacramental nature, exist

and have meaning only as the form of Christ in history. In its sacramental, structural reality the Church is always directed "beyond" herself to the Lord present as Spirit. This is where the reality of the Church as partner-Bride comes out. The Church in her visible form and structure is the helper and partner through and in whom the Spirit works in order to inform and transform men and women with the saving love of God.²⁷

According to Balthasar, the sacramental nature of the Church is important precisely as a safeguard and guarantee of the on-going presence and communicability of the Christ event. The Church as sacrament and the individual sacraments of the Church are the guarantee that the Spirit of Christ in its divine, incomprehensible fullness is present to be received, regardless of the limited, sinful subjectivity of believers, both clerical and lay.²⁸ If the presence of Jesus were solely dependent upon the degree of holiness of believers, then we could have no certainty that the Christ event could truly be mediated to us in its fullness through the Spirit.²⁹

An der Ereignishaftigkeit der sakramentalen Gestalt wird die vermittelnde Ereignishaftigkeit alles Institutionellen in der Kirche deutlich ersichtbar, unbeschadet seiner vom Einzel-subjekt unabhängigen Realität. 30

All is ordered toward the mediation of the trinitarian

love revealed in Christ. The Church itself is "crystallized love";³¹ Christian cult, especially the Eucharist, is enfleshment of love (*Verleiblichung der Liebe*).³² The institutional-sacramental nature of the Church is not absolute, in and for itself, but relative to and ordered toward the actual communication of trinitarian love, the Spirit.³³

b. The Sacraments of the Church

Turning our attention now to the individual sacraments as the concrete, objective forms of mediation of the gestalt of Jesus Christ in history, it is not surprising to find that Balthasar stresses the Christological character of each sacrament rather than its general anthropological or symbolic context in the life of the believer. Before the sacraments can be understood from the point of view of the response of the believing community and in terms of its concrete anthropological-sociological situation, the sacraments must be understood as a part of God's revelation. They are the on-going appearance in history of the trinitarian love revealed in the Incarnation of the Son, worked by the Holy Spirit. The following text brings out Balthasar's stress on the divine power active in the sacraments.

Die Sakramente sind ein Kernstück kirchlicher Ästhetik, weil hier unsichtbare Gnade Gottes

nicht nur in der Christusgestalt sichtbar und faßbar wird, sondern diese nochmals in einer aller subjektiven Schwankung überlegenen gültigen Gestalt vor uns tritt und sich in uns gestaltend ausdrückt. 34

The sacraments are the means by which God accomplishes his saving work in history in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are differentiated primarily according to the various ways in which God reveals himself in the saving humanity of Christ, and not according to general anthropological considerations.³⁵ Of course the sacraments "speak to" the concrete human condition, and as such there is always an anthropological context to be considered. Balthasar's approach, however, is much more determined by the aesthetical perspective. The sacraments make present the gestalt of Jesus Christ in its various aspects. Thus he suggests that various aspects of Christ's earthly life become "visible" or manifest in the individual sacraments, not merely as a remembrance of past history, but as present and transforming mystery³⁶ by virtue of which a specifically Christological "form" is embedded into the various aspects of human existence.³⁷ Through the sacraments, believers are drawn into various exemplary (*urbildhaft*) Christological postures and actions.³⁸

The relationship between Christ as *Urbild* and sacrament as *Abbild* is much more than an external similarity, whether in the visible form of the

sacramental rite or in the moral efforts of the believer. The sacraments are the on-going ritual re-presentation of the unique mystery of Christ: the historical Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of the Lord. Here Balthasar follows in great measure the theology of O. Casels.³⁹ Through the sacraments, believers are enabled not merely to imitate Christ in an ethical sense or to enjoy a new condition of existence as the consequence of the salvation event understood as a part event. Rather, believers are drawn into the mystery of Christ itself in an ontic sense and so participate personally in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

To understand each sacrament "Christologically", one must indicate the particular, personal, temporal-historical reality of the existence of Christ which is truly opened up for the believer and made available for his participation.⁴⁰ In the last chapter, for example, we indicated how the faith and prayer of Jesus is more than just a model for the disciple. Through the Spirit of the Lord poured into the Church, believers are drawn into and have a share in the faith and prayer of Jesus himself.

The Lord is present in the essential aspects of his divine-human existence through the sacraments in time and history, not merely to be contemplated but to transform. The Spirit enables the believer to be transformed into the likeness of the Incarnate Son in a sacramental "process of formation"⁴¹ which is really a process of ontologically trans-

formative in-forming, investiture with the form of Christ. Thus the real form of the sacraments is the form of the existence of Christ himself.

The sacraments are the presence in history of the saving humanity of the Lord. The ritual gestures of the sacraments are the ecclesial gestures of the Lord himself, present in the power of the Spirit.

Das Sakrament ist kirchliche Gebärde Jesu Christi zum Menschen hin; die Gebärde kleidet sich, um verständlich zu sein, in ein allgemein-verständliches kosmisches (Elemente) oder menschliches Bild (Handauflegung, Verzeihen von Mensch zu Mensch), der allgemein-verständliche Symbolgehalt des Bildes aber ist selber nur Hinweis auf die von Christus getane leib-seelische Gebärde, die der Glaubende versteht: sowohl durch den Hinweis des irdischen Bildes wie durch die einmalige symbolische Kraft des Gottmenschlichkeit Christi. ⁴²

It is not necessary for our purposes to describe each of the individual sacraments.⁴³ We do wish to consider the Eucharist, however, since it is the heart of the Church as the mediation of the Christ event in history through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴

c. The Holy Spirit and the Eucharist

The Eucharist is at the very center of the Church. The Church is a eucharistic reality in two senses. First, it is born out of the eucharistic kenosis of the Incarnate Son on the cross. The sacramental

Church is rooted in and constituted by the inner reality of the crucified Lord: Spirit, blood and water. Everything in her essential structure is formed from Christ's innermost Spirit.⁴⁵ We saw in the previous chapter how the eucharistic sacrifice of the cross can be seen as the specific work of the Holy Spirit as the Creator of the mission-existence of Jesus. One might say that the Holy Spirit confects the first eucharist in the life, death and resurrection of the Son.

Aus dem Gesagten erhellt zunächst der innige Zusammenhang, ja die gegenseitige Voraussetzung zwischen Eucharistie und Heiligem Geist. Die Objektivierung des Geistes war die Voraussetzung für die Vollendung des kenotischen Gehorsams des Sohnes und damit für die Verflüssigung seiner ganzen Substanz in der Eucharistie, und eben diese Verflüssigung war wieder die Voraussetzung für die Freiwerdung des Geistes⁴⁶ in die Kirche und durch sie in die Welt hinein.

It is this very Spirit which is surrendered from the cross, in the power of which the Son is raised and glorified, and sent from the Father's right hand as the inner life of the Church (*anima ecclesiae*).⁴⁷ In the power of this Spirit of the crucified Lord, the Church actualizes itself in the celebration of the Eucharist.

This is the second sense in which the Church is a eucharistic reality. The Church realizes its identity, "becomes" what it is, in the celebration of the eucharistic meal as the obedient remembrance of the passion of the Lord, the event in which

it came and continues to be.⁴⁸ In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church actualizes itself ever anew and lives from her origin in the Eucharistic kenosis of the cross.

Through the Eucharist, the Church arises as the Body of Christ.⁴⁹ This is precisely the work of the Holy Spirit, and why for Balthasar, the miracle of transubstantiation as well as the formation of the scriptures is to be attributed to him. The mission of the Spirit is the formation of the mystical Body of Christ through the "pneumatic universalization of the historical Christ".⁵⁰

For Balthasar, therefore, the Eucharistic meal of the Church is primarily the action of Christ present in his Spirit, who gives his free self-surrender in love on the cross the form of a meal in which his body and blood, his own personal substance, are surrendered in order to nourish and fill his disciples. Secondly, the Eucharist is the action of the Church, which in obedient faith remembers, celebrates, and so makes present the "self-presentation" of the Lord.

Der verständlichmachende Akzent liegt auf der Realpräsenz, in welcher der lebendige Christus durch seine eigene Machttat sich für die Kirche vergegenwärtigt, aber nicht ohne in dieser Machttat das Realisieren der Gemeinde mitzuberechnen, die, indem sie erinnernd ihn realisiert, sich selber realisiert. 51

The eucharistic union-in-difference between Christ and the Church is grounded in the Spirit, who is (1) the *Spiritus Creator* who creates the eucharistic existence of the Son, (2) the inner reality of the eucharistic sacrifice breathed out from the cross, and (3) the inner life of the believing community, the soul of the Church.⁵² The Church celebrates the Eucharist and so realizes itself as the Body of Christ by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit and not through the power of its "own" human spirit. This is clear liturgically from the Epiclesis. And yet the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the Father and the Son in his risen humanity is breathed into the Church and into each believer, so that the Church lives out of the power of the Spirit, not as an external, foreign Spirit, but as its "own", inner Spirit.⁵³ The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church to the extent that the Church accepts in obedience the sacrifice of the Son as the form of its existence.⁵⁴

The Spirit is the "Lord of the sacraments", who working through the objective-hierarchical forms of the sacraments, fills the believers with the divine life of Christ. The Spirit is always both "official-objective" and "personal-subjective".⁵⁵ Spirit and structure in the Church are a unity. Life is communicated by the Spirit in the concrete form of the sacraments in the Church as the Body of Christ.⁵⁶

d. Summary

For Balthasar, therefore, the sacraments are an essential part of the entire process of the Incarnation and the Spirit is the Lord of the process, from its very beginning in Nazareth until the end of history when the glorified Son comes again.⁵⁷ The Spirit who overshadowed the Virgin Mary in the first and absolutely unique Incarnation of the Word, is the same Spirit who comes down upon the eucharistic elements of bread and wine to⁵⁸ transform them into the body and blood of Christ. He is the Spirit, who making the Lord bodily present in the mediating forms of the sacraments, transforms the believing community by informing it ever more deeply with the eucharistic form of Christ, leading it ever more deeply into the event of the cross and resurrection.⁵⁹

The Church as a whole is the sacrament of salvation in and for the world, sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, the historical, personal re-presentation of the gestalt of Jesus Christ in the abiding presence of the Spirit. In this sense the Church is the continuation of his incarnate presence as the Lord of history. This is where God concretely shares his Spirit with humanity. In this Church, the individual sacraments are concrete forms for the mediating activity of the Spirit. The Spirit is both the form-giver of the sacraments and the divine life which they mediate as the gift given.

3. SCRIPTURAL FORM

In considering the scriptures as a continuing mode of the Incarnation of the eternal Word, Balthasar tries to avoid two extremes: first, the pre-critical tendency to view the Bible as a book fallen down from heaven, infallible even in each individual literary form, God's word to humanity "dictated" by the Holy Spirit in such a way that the human writer functioned in a purely instrumental, even mechanical way; and second, the modern tendency to see the Bible merely as a product of the Church, humanity's word about God, merely as human reflection on the Christ event.⁶⁰ Balthasar stresses that the scriptures are together God's word to the Church and the reflection of the Church on the Word which she has received, whereby the priority of the first moment over the second is strongly emphasized.⁶¹

a. The Spirit, the Church and the Incarnation of the Word

The Word of God is from the very beginning directed to fruitfulness in the believer. As Word of God to humanity, it always already creates and includes the form of a human response to this Word.⁶² But Balthasar emphasizes that this is never primarily a single human believer, never a single human response. Rather, the Church as a whole, as constituted in the perfect response of Mary and animated by the Holy Spirit, is the first

hearer of the Word.⁶³ It is the faith of the Church as a whole and not the faith of any particular believer that constitutes the medium in which the Word of God can take flesh in the scriptures.

Now the divine Logos can manifest itself more purely and unmistakably the purer and more transparent the medium of faith is which receives it and in which it assumes concrete form.⁶⁴ The humanity of Christ was the purest, most perfect medium for the bodily expression of the Logos-Spirit. But the body of Christ as the concrete expression of the divine Logos was itself formed out of Mary. Her receptive posture as a vessel for the divine Word is faith par excellence and is a *Realsymbol* of the receptive posture in faith of the Church as a whole which gives birth to the "scriptural" body of Christ.

Das fleischlich-persönliche Verhältnis Christus-Maria aber meinte *von vornherein* das allgemeine und soziale zwischen Christus und der Kirche; und wenn Maria im Glauben Christus gebar, so gebar die Kirche im Glauben die Schrift. Sie ist Wort Gottes, und nicht Wort der Kirche, aber sie ist von der Kirche in ihrer Glaubensmeditation ausge-tragenes und wirklich herausgestelltes, geborenes Wort. 65

Thus we can see how Balthasar both stresses the priority of God's initiative through the overshadowing, inspiring Spirit in the creation of the scriptures, while at the same time insisting upon the essential role of the Church in their formulation. In this sense, the scriptures are also seen as

a model for all theological reflection. All objective theology, according to Balthasar, can arise only out of a medium which embraces the living historical Christ and the faith of the Church in the irreducible unity. This unity is irreducible because Christ can only be that which he is, the self-communication of trinitarian life, in the faith life of the Church, and the Church can only be that which she is, those called by the universal saving will of God to share in his divine life, in Christ.

The remembrance of the Church is no mere subjective reflection, but is grounded in the objective interpretative action of the Spirit of the risen Christ, who teaches us to remember all that Christ said, and leads us into the fullness of truth (Jo 14, 26; 16, 13). The scriptures are not the self-revelation of the Church but the inner testimony of faith and the outer testimony of tradition to that which is not identical with the Church, but which rests in her, just as the seed of the man rests in the womb of the woman. Mary's response in faith did not create the concrete form of the Logos in the Incarnation, but it was the fruitful medium into which this form was sunk. In an analogous way, the faith of the Church does not create the scriptures. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes use of her expressive abilities in order to give God's Word in her form.⁶⁶

Following this analogy further, Balthasar notes that while Mary gives birth to the person of Jesus

as the revelation of the Father, the Church in giving birth to the scriptures bears not the revelation itself, but the authentic witness to the revelation in Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ As authentic witness to the divine revelation in Christ, the scriptures are an essential, integral part of the fullness of the concrete form of Christ's presence in history. They are the objective witness of the Holy Spirit who is at once the Spirit of the risen Lord poured out from heaven, and the Spirit within the hearts of believers which enables them to perceive God's revelation in Christ, and perceiving it, to be taken into it and transformed by it.

Als dieses auf Christus vom Geist Christi in der Kirche fallende Licht der gestaltenden Deutung gehört die Schrift zur Christusgestalt selbst und ist ein Ausdruck seiner Fülle und Herrlichkeit.⁶⁸

From this incarnational perspective, which sees the scriptures as a *Realsymbol* of the Incarnate Logos, it is clear that the scriptures cannot be understood adequately as one historical document among many, to be interpreted solely by so-called historical-critical methods. These methods, according to Balthasar, are valid and helpful because of the concrete, historical form of the scriptures, but they are entirely preliminary. They must be completed by a spiritual-pneumatic interpretation which can be accomplished only in and through the Spirit active in the faith of the whole Church. Historical-critical methods are helpful in understanding the literary "body" of the scriptures, but this "body" or form has

no meaning in itself. Scripture does indeed have form, but this form is theologically significant only insofar as it is a witness through the Holy Spirit to the "form" of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Only in the Spirit can the letters of the scriptures become living Word.⁶⁹

Balthasar explicitly formulates his incarnational understanding of scripture in Christological terms: the relationship between the human and the divine in the scriptures has as its measure and norm the relationship between the human and divine natures in Christ.⁷⁰ Just as the humanity of Christ serves as the concrete historical form or expression of the divine personality of the Logos, so too, the scriptures are truly human words, but as such, the expression of a divine "content". Precisely from this Christological perspective, Balthasar attempts to understand the scripture as a genuinely historical, concrete and human document, which nonetheless is the product of and witness to the concrete historical self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The plethora of different patterns of thought and literary forms in the scripture are not signs of a human origin, but indications of the thoroughly historical way in which God reveals himself.⁷¹

b. Witness and Witnessing Word in the Spirit

The scripture is the Word of God in two interrelated senses. It is the Word of God which witnesses

to God's Word: the Word witnessed and the witnessing Word. Balthasar holds that the scripture is not identical with revelation, since it is God's Word in the form of the literary witness of the Church to God's self-revelation in Christ. However, as a witnessing Word, it is an essential part of the fullness of the Word to which it witnesses. Ultimately this paradox can only be solved in the Spirit. The Son is God's eternal Word and self-revelation to the world. In the scriptures, the Spirit speaks a divine, and so, authentic "commentary" on the Word-Son. This divine Word is new and different, precisely because it arises in the medium of the believing Church.

Das Offenbarungswort ist primär der Sohn, der vom Vater redet durch den Heiligen Geist. Das Schriftwort wirkt primär der Heilige Geist, der als Geist des Vaters die (werdende und gewordene) Menschwerdung des Sohnes ermöglicht, begleitet, beleuchtet und deutet, und der als Geist des Sohnes dessen Selbstauslegung in bleibende, überzeitliche Formen faßt... Beide Formen des Wortes sind zuletzt das eine Wort Gottes, das in der einen Offenbarung sich selber bezeugt. 72

Thus the inner unity (not identity) of God's Word in Jesus Christ and in the scripture is grounded in the Spirit who formed the earthly existence of Christ and who gives this existence lasting concrete ecclesial form through the scripture. In this sense, the scripture is the Word of the Spirit. Through the scriptures, the Spirit gives the lives

of believers concrete Christological form. Scripture is the instrument of the Holy Spirit through which he transforms men and women into the form of Christ.⁷³

c. Canonicity and Inspiration

Thus for Balthasar, the scripture is both mediating form and transforming power in the Spirit.⁷⁴ This is where the real significance of the canonicity and inspiration of scripture becomes clear for Balthasar. As a mediating form, scripture is the divine, objective guarantee in the Spirit of the continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.⁷⁵ The canonicity of scripture includes something like an "infallible promise" for the believer and for all seeking Christ, that Christ can actually be encountered here in his gratuitous, saving presence.⁷⁶ Similarly, the real significance of inspiration is not to be found in a freedom from error, which Balthasar understands as a secondary "side-effect" of inspiration. The fact that something is free from error is not a sign that it is inspired. The primary effect and significance of inspiration is to be found in the transformative power of the scripture, through which the Holy Spirit as *auctor primarius* leads the Church ever more deeply into the divine form of trinitarian love revealed concretely in Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

Thus the inspiration of scripture is not something

confined to its composition, but is the source of its on-going transformative power in the lives of believers. The scripture is the living Word of the Spirit, who throughout all history "interprets" the Father's personal Word of revelation by making the objective event of redemption subjectively present.⁷⁸

This is a sign of the "quasi-sacramental" nature of the scriptures and of the inner relationship between word and sacrament in the Church. The "spiritual" or "pneumatic" sense of scripture is not merely one level of interpretation among many, but the central significance of God's Word as directed toward incarnation in the faith and life of the hearer. This is the necessary transposition in which the Christ event becomes existentially real for me, and not simply a reported fact of past history. It is precisely in the Holy Spirit that the scripture remains God's living, universal and saving Word.

Sofern die Schrift "Leib des Logos" ist, und nicht nur unbeteiligte Bezeugung seines Sterbens und Auferstehens, ist der Übergang in ihr von littera zu spiritus Teilnahme am Heilseignis, ohne welche die Geistwerdung des Buchstabens christlich nicht vorstellbar wäre. Denn Geist besagt hier. keine Abstraktion irgendwelcher Art, sondern jene Universalisierung der geschehenen Geschichte durch eine positive Aufhebung der Zeit in die Ewigkeit Gottes, wodurch der menschengewordene Logos als ganzer Pneuma wird: freie, allmächtige, allgegenwärtige Geist-Wirklichkeit (2 Kor 3, 17.18)⁷⁹

For Balthasar, scripture ultimately manifests a

trinitarian form. In truly human forms of expression and as a truly dynamic part of human salvation history, the scripture is fundamentally the Word of the Spirit, the divine commentary on the Father's Word in Jesus Christ.⁸⁰ According to Balthasar, this trinitarian structure is required by the very nature of revelation as God's self-revelation: only God can speak adequately about God; only God can say what God "means" in his self-revelation.⁸¹

Before moving on, we might briefly note that the whole question of discernment is still open. How does the Spirit speak through the scripture? How can the believer know that his interpretation of scripture, whether meditated upon privately or heard in the liturgy, is "of the Spirit"? If the scripture is meant to give the Church a certain kind of certainty that the risen Lord is here, alive in the Spirit, to be met and "heard", then, precisely because of the "certainty", the question as to authentic and authoritative discernment must be raised. Thus, it is clear for Balthasar, that one cannot speak of scripture (or, for that matter, sacrament) without eventually speaking of office and authority. This will occupy us later.

d. The Freedom of the Spirit: The Living Word

We pointed out in the first chapter of this study how the Holy Spirit is God precisely in his capacity

to be ever-new, ever-greater. The Spirit is the infinitely fruitful love between Father and Son. It is not surprising, therefore, that Balthasar also stresses the dynamic openness of the scripture precisely as an expression of the infinite freedom of the Spirit in his mission to universalize the Christ event.

In the immanent Trinity, the Spirit is the personal witness to the fact that the divine love which completely surrenders and expresses itself in the Son is not an end, but a beginning, a wellspring of life and love which manifests itself to be ever-greater. In the Incarnation of the Son, the perfectly adequate relationship between "form" and "content" does not exclude the fact that the "content" which is the divine Son, is always greater than the humanity of Jesus, its created "form" of expression. The humanity of Christ does reveal the hidden God, but can do so only by hiding him.⁸² This is also true, says Balthasar, in the incarnational form of the scripture. The divine, infinite meaning of scripture cannot be completely exhausted by the written words, even though the words of scripture are an adequate and reliable medium for the Spirit. The Spirit is always greater than the letter.⁸³

Thus the closing of the objective revelation at the end of the apostolic age, as expressed in the definitive form of the biblical canon, is no contradiction to the on-going inspiration of the scripture in the life of faith. The Spirit makes God's definitive Word present in the on-going

history of the world in infinitely many different ways. Through the Spirit, God's Word becomes a living, personal address to each individual hearer.⁸⁴ Not only as an accomplished, written record, but far more importantly as the on-going work of the incarnational Spirit, the scripture signals not the end of God's revelation but rather its ever-new beginning.⁸⁵ Of course, Balthasar does not suggest that God has something "else" to reveal to us that he didn't reveal in Jesus Christ. It is rather that this very revelation as mediated in the scripture is ever-greater than our ability to understand and live it. The Holy Spirit brings out new and different aspects of the one divine fullness as appropriate and saving in the most varied human situations. For Balthasar, the freedom of the Spirit manifests itself through the living newness of scripture, its ability to create a new future in hope, grounded in the Paschal Mystery which it makes present.

4. TRADITION AND OFFICE

a. Tradition as Kenosis: God's On-Going Self-Surrender

Both word and sacrament are forms of the concrete objective mediation of the self-surrendering trinitarian love which has appeared once and for all in Jesus Christ. Theologically then, the most profound form of tradition is literally

God's "handing over" of himself in the Son. Tradition in the Church must be understood primarily as the self-surrender of God and then secondarily in terms of the manifold, changing situation of the history into which God gives himself. Thus for Balthasar, it is the divine kenosis, in which God hands over the Son for us and for our salvation, which is the source and the sustaining ground for the ecclesial "tradition" of word and sacrament as expression and mediation of that kenosis.⁸⁶

Kenosis means surrender and, therefore, tradition. Tradition is that which is handed over, surrendered. Christ hands himself over to the Church in the form of word and sacrament as part of a process of tradition that begins in the kenotic love of the Trinity and reaches its peak in the death of the Son on the cross,⁸⁷ where, loving to the very end, Christ hands over his Spirit, to give birth to the Church. The divine kenosis and the life it creates are the work of the *Spiritus Creator*.

Ist nicht auch Zeugung Tradition (der eigensten Substanz in einem unbegreiflichen Wagnis), und ist nicht deshalb alle echt geübte Tradition Zeugung, Tat im heiligen Schöpfergeist? 88

Thus, Balthasar understands tradition in the Church as (1) the self-surrender of the Lord on the cross in which he "hands down" his living personal reality in the Spirit, (2) his self-surrender in the mediating forms of word and

sacrament, and (3) the on-going process of this self-surrender in the history of the living Church.

Christianity is not primarily a "book religion" according to Balthasar. Neither is it essentially cult. Both scripture and sacrament are mediating forms of the decisive, irrevocable tradition of God in Jesus Christ. The "content" of tradition is the Son surrendered on the cross, now present in the Spirit. The concrete "forms" this tradition takes in history are not absolute and self-contained. Scripture and sacrament are normative as the objective mediating presence of the unique Christ event, but they are relative to what they mediate: God's gift of himself in the Spirit of Christ. This divine reality is far greater, far richer than the "letter" of the scripture.

Das bezeugende Wort bezeugt, daß das bezeugte Wort, das Wort der Offenbarung, unendlich reicher ist, als was im Schriftzeugnis festgehalten werden kann. 89

The same is true of the eucharistic elements of bread and wine. The trinitarian life of the Spirit is infinitely greater than the eucharistic community of the Church. It is the paradox of the Incarnation that God can completely reveal himself and hand himself over in absolute love in the humanity of Jesus, and at the same time remain the ever-greater God who will never cease to be infinite mystery. The absolute God reveals himself as the hidden one; hidden, he truly reveals himself. This holds analogously for the scripture and

the sacraments which as mediating forms are also part of the Incarnation. While they mediate the Christ event in history and are the objectively reliable re-presentation of the gestalt of Christ, they cannot "capture" or comprehend the fullness of the person they mediate.⁹⁰ The Lord who is Spirit is Lord over the scriptures and the sacraments. Christ hands himself over into the hands of the Church in such a way that through the forms of word and sacrament, he remains the ever-living, unchanging yet infinitely varied, ever-creative and surprising new life of the Church: precisely as Spirit.⁹¹ Scripture and sacrament don't "contain" God; God uses them to give himself away as the ever-greater mystery of love.

b. Scripture and Tradition

Because God is triune, the Spirit of the ever-greater love between Father and Son must come to expression in some special way in the form of God's revelation. Balthasar sees the ever-greater fullness, the excess (*Überschuß*) of the personal truth of God's revelation in the Incarnate Son precisely in the living ecclesial tradition as the work of the Spirit. The Church in its living history is the "fullness of him who fills all in all" (*Eph 1, 23*).⁹² Tradition is the principle of the on-going historicity of God's revelation, mediated normatively in word and sacrament, but reflected upon and expressed ever-anew in the life of the Church. Tradition is the

work of the Holy Spirit precisely insofar as it is living change and growth, not as a distancing from the origin, but as the Church's "abiding" in God's truth and God's truth (as a seed which bears ever-greater fruit) in the Church. Clearly Balthasar is thinking in the terms of the Spirit in *John*, where such "abiding" is possible through and in the Spirit.

Wandel ist Veränderung, aber glaubender Wandel ist Wandel innerhalb der ein für allemal vollzogenen Veränderung, die Gottes Tat ist: in der Wandlung von Tod zum Leben wie sie eingeborgen und stets präsent ist in der eucharistischen Wandlung. 93

Thus according to Balthasar, one cannot play off scripture and tradition against each other. Both are ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church as a whole. The Spirit is both the incarnational Creator of the scriptural form of the mediation of the Christ event and the inner life and transformative power of this form, which expresses itself in the ecclesial tradition. Without a continuing living tradition--a reflective "handing on"--within the Church, the scriptures could not be what they are most deeply: the real communication of God's saving Word. Without the scripture as God's saving Word, on the other hand, tradition has nothing saving to "hand on" and becomes a superficial ritualism.

Scripture and tradition are both aspects of the on-going process of God's self-communication, which

of its very nature is both historically unique (*geschichtlich-einmalig*) and historically universal (*geschichtlich-allmalig*). It is historically unique, once and for all in the utter fullness of the Christ event, and in an analogous way, in the normative form of the biblical canon. It is eschatologically universal, once and for all in the constantly new forms of its presence in the living interpretation and reflection of faith and in the actualization in the lives of believers.⁹⁴

God's Word remains a living Word and is always "carried" by the Spirit into a concrete, living situation. Thus in stressing the necessity of tradition, Balthasar compares the living truth of God's Word to the manna in the desert. It cannot be stored up. Today it is fresh, tomorrow it is spoiled. The truth of God's revelation in Christ is living and it must be reflected upon ever-anew, otherwise it will have no power to give life here and now. Otherwise, the living faith of the dead becomes the dead faith of the living!

Das Gefäß, das sie enthält,--zum Beispiel die Sprache, die Bild- und Begriffswelt--verstaubt, verrostet, zerbröckelt; Altes bleibt nur jung, wenn es mit jüngster Kraft auf das noch Ältere, Immerzeitliche, die gegenwärtige Offenbarung Gottes bezogen wird. 95

For Balthasar, the tradition which makes possible the living mediation of Christ has three central dimensions.

c. Tradition as Doctrine and Dogma

The first main dimension of the living tradition of the Church has to do with reflection, theory and teaching and is closely connected with the magisterial function in the hierarchical Church. Both on-going theological reflection and authoritative teaching office play essential roles. The mystery of the Christ event is so inexhaustible that it demands constant meditation. It calls for deeper, and when possible, more precise formulation.⁹⁶ Theological reflection is essential. For Balthasar it can happen only within the Church and its faith; specifically in the power of the Spirit.⁹⁷ Theological reflection is a kind of enfleshment of God's divine revelation in human thinking and understanding.

Christliche Theologie wird, in welcher Gestalt und Abschattung immer sie auftritt, stets *Einverleibung* des gottmenschlichen Offenbarungsgehaltes in menschliches, wenn auch gläubiges Denken und Verstehen sein, um gerade kraft dieser *je neuen Inkarnation* das Einzigartige und insofern Ganz-Andere der Erscheinung Gottes in Jesus Christus zu bezeugen und zu beweisen. 98

Balthasar points out that the scriptures themselves already manifest a tradition of theological reflection.⁹⁹ On-going theological reflection is incorporated into the tradition precisely as a new living expression of the biblical truth. One cannot simply dispense with patristic and scholastic

theology where it does not explicitly "repeat" the scripture!¹⁰⁰ For Balthasar, the scripture remains the normative expression of God's revelation, but theological reflection is an integral part of the fullness of this revelation, a creative capacity with God gives the Church enabling it to participate in his self-expression.¹⁰¹

When called for, erroneous interpretations must be identified and the path to the central mystery of faith marked out as clearly as possible. This is above all the responsibility of the hierarchical magisterium in dogmatic definitions. Balthasar points out however, that the magisterium exercises this authoritative teaching ministry in the Church in cooperation with the theological ministry in the Church.¹⁰² This cooperation, which remains oriented to the final authority of the magisterium, is grounded in the Spirit. This must be the case, according to Balthasar, for the Spirit which is the heart of theology as the "science of faith" is the same Spirit, who through the solemn definitions of the councils and the popes, guarantees that the true meaning of God's revelation in Jesus Christ be handed down in its full truth.¹⁰³ Balthasar speaks of a "kind of self-regulation through the Holy Spirit of the living Christ".¹⁰⁴

Balthasar clearly stresses the final authority and responsibility of the hierarchical magisterium, ultimately when necessary in solemn, infallible definitions, to speak the finally binding word.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, he is not so "conservative" as many of his opponents think. Balthasar stresses

the fact that theology has a different but essential task. It tries to "systematize" the doctrine of the Church by showing the coherence and unity of the scriptures and the dogmatic formulations of the Church.¹⁰⁶ The responsibility of the magisterium to explicate a certain point in terms of a concrete problem is something else. Balthasar calls for mutual discussion and enlightenment. While such discussion cannot be conceived of as two different, equally authoritative *cathedrae*, the magisterium is greatly dependent upon theology precisely because it does not have "infused" theological expertise. Balthasar seems to agree with Newman, who saw theology as the fundamental and regulative principle of the entire ecclesial system, coextensive with revelation, and capable of determining what in ecclesial definitions is to be considered infallible, and who nonetheless located this competence on the side of the *sensus fidelium* and not on the side of the *Ecclesia docens*.¹⁰⁷ Precisely because of the irreducible tension between the ever-greater mystery and the necessary (but impossible) attempt to "define" it, the mutually complementary ministries are necessary. Final definitions are not subject to appeal; but all human words--even the clearest--are in need of interpretation. Every true statement can be seen in a new and larger context. Thus, the work of theology is never ended by a definition. Balthasar even shows how Vatican I defines in principle the "undefinability" of dogma in the sense of a scientific sentence, and thus (paradoxically) creates a new atmosphere for dialogue

between theology and the magisterium which exercises its office precisely in the tension of having to teach but not being able to adequately pin down the mystery.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, Balthasar clearly emphasizes the priority of scripture. Dogmatic formulations cannot compete with the form and formulations of scripture. They cannot supplant scripture or purport to express more completely what in the scriptures only partially, time-conditioned and inadequately came to expression.

Die lehramtlichen Äußerungen stehen auf einer anderen Stufe: sie sind Offenbarung-auslegend und nicht grundlegend, sie erstreben kein Ausdruckssystem, welches irgendwann teilweise oder im ganzen die Schrift zu ersetzen vermöchte.¹⁰⁹

If a new dimension of the mystery of God's self-revelation comes to light in the theological reflection of the Church, then it is not because God reveals something new which was withheld from former generations, but because the Holy Spirit casts light on the Scripture and enables the Church to see an aspect of the mystery which she had failed to see.

d. Tradition as Shared Faith

The second dimension of tradition has to do with experience and praxis. Ecclesial tradition is a chain of lived faith and experience passed down from previous generations. It is an inheritance of wisdom from the practical exercise of discernment of spirits in the on-going life of the Church in the world: not only the spectacular witness or martyrdom or the spiritual experience of the great saints, but also the faith as it is passed on from parents to children by virtue of their own example.¹¹⁰

Unlike the previous dimension, this is not the realm of theological reflection, doctrinal dispute and authoritative definition. Balthasar points out that there is an extremely important dimension to Christian life as passed down in tradition, which consists in personal, spiritual experience and a resulting conviction, to be gained only by action. This is the wisdom and experience born of praxis. This is not to say that one should, or even can, separate "religious experience" of lived faith from reflection upon such experience. Nonetheless, says Balthasar, the peculiar thing about personal, spiritual experience born of practiced faith, is that one either has the experience or doesn't: one can hardly dispute about it. Experience of the mystery of the reality of Christ can't be "proved", only shared. The common experience of the Church in its faith, lived over centuries is something like an invitation to the one searching for God, seeking to experience him. Obviously, the

scriptures and the liturgical life of the Church in its prayer and sacraments are such invitations as well. Nonetheless, Balthasar wants to draw attention to the important role of personally lived, shared faith experience in the living tradition of the faith.

e. The Saints: Living Interpretation

The third dimension of tradition to which Balthasar draws attention is the on-going life of faith of the saints. They are the "great experiencers". By this Balthasar does not mean that the saints had or sought after unusual inner "states" of consciousness of feeling. Leaving that question aside, he points out that the deepest experience of God always comes when one is ready to take the faith seriously, to risk everything in an unconditional surrender in love to God and so to place oneself totally at his disposal "for the others". The saints are the true, living "commentaries" on the scripture, the authentic, personal interpretation of the gospel, the actualization of the reconciling love offered in the eucharistic.¹¹¹ The existence of the saints is lived theology¹¹² which, like theological reflection, can throw new light on various aspects of the Christ event, and lead the Church more deeply into the mystery of God's love. We shall return to this theme, which expresses a life-long interest of Balthasar's, at the end of Part II.

5. THE SPIRIT AS NORM

In our discussion of the connection between word, sacrament, tradition and office in the Church, we have already seen how Balthasar grounds the necessity of tradition and office in the Christ event itself. Here is where all authoritative, definitive "tradition" begins. God hands over his Son to the world out of infinite love. The Holy Spirit, who was the creator and former of the self-surrendering trinitarian love in its economic form in the existence of the Incarnate Son, is breathed into the Church, where he continues to make the Christ event present and actual in the lives of believers. As such, he is also the Creator and former of the Church as a whole and of the various concrete forms of mediation in the Church, where the on-going "tradition" of God's self-surrender authoritatively takes place in a divinely guaranteed fashion. By this is meant, of course, that God's offer of himself remains definitive, irrevocable and actual. Whether this offer of divine life, the grace of the Spirit, is accepted and actualized in the life of the believer is another question.

The Spirit is not merely an abstract structural principle but the divine life itself which is communicated. We saw that since it is the Spirit of the ever-greater God which is breathed into the Church, the on-going tradition in the Church, especially in the ever-deepening reflection of faith in theology and the history of doctrine,

and in the ever-deepening actualization in Christian life, through religious experience, charisms and the lives of the saints, is a sign of the ever-greater fullness of the Paschal Mystery.

We wish to examine more closely the living character of tradition in the Church so that we can understand just how Balthasar conceives this "more"--this ever-greater *Überschuß*. How is the Holy Spirit both norm and source of newness? Can one speak of on-going revelation in history or of "development" of dogma? Is there such a thing as "progress" in salvation history?

a. The Fullness of Revelation Given in Christ

On the one hand, Balthasar constantly stresses the newness and freedom of the Spirit; on the other hand, the unsurpassable fullness of God's revelation in Christ. In the life, death and resurrection of Christ, God reveals himself completely and irrevocably. Thus it is clear that the newness of the Spirit and whatever might be considered "development" in the time of the Church is fundamentally and determinatively rooted in Christ. The paradox of salvation history consists in the fact that (1) the saving encounter between God and man is a genuine history; (2) that history reaches an unsurpassable, eschatological fullness in Jesus Christ; and (3) that this history does not on that account

cease, but continues on by virtue of the living presence of the Christ event--as event--in the Spirit.

How does Balthasar understand "development" or newness with respect to God's self-revelation in salvation history? In the time between Abraham and Jesus, the time of the Old Covenant, one can speak of a real process of development and unfolding. The revelation of God is underway. As *Hebrews* (1, 1) expresses it: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets..." Even in the life of Christ, according to Balthasar, one can speak of an increase (*Steigerung*) of God's revelation: not in the adoptionistic sense that Jesus only gradually becomes (and so reveals) the Son of God, but in the sense that God reveals fully who he is and what he has freely decided to do for the world in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Only from this point of view does the gestalt of Jesus as the revelation of the kenotic love of the Trinity reach its fullness.¹¹³ Here, "in these last days"---literally the last days of Jesus' existence, which are also the inauguration of the last days of the end-time--God has finally "spoken to us by a Son" who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature". (*Heb* 1, 1-2) God has surrendered himself in love to the very end. (*Jo* 13, 1) There is nothing "more" God has to "say" about himself, nothing "more" to give of himself. In this sense, that which God hands over to the world and what the Church "hands down" throughout all generations is an unsurpassable superlative: "greater love has no man than this..." (*Jo* 15, 13)¹¹⁴

In der Endzeit, in der die Kirche lebt, kann heilsgeschichtlich gesehen nichts "Neues" mehr geschehen. Alles ist "vollbracht", zu Ende getan. 115

The time of the Church is the end-time, the time of the new and final Covenant. The on-going, living tradition of the Church as salvation history cannot increase or "improve" upon the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Scripture and sacrament in the living tradition of the Church are not "additions" to the Christ event, but an essential, inner part of and the definitive and irrevocable mediation of this event in history. Balthasar sees this particularly expressed in the closed canon of scripture and in the objective form of the sacraments.¹¹⁶ The history of the Church is unique. It is the presence of "fulfilled eternity in time" in the power of the Spirit.¹¹⁷

Kirchenzeit als Ära des Heiligen Geistes ist im Gegensatz zum Alten Bund und zur Ära Christi keine Zeit, worin Offenbarung wird und geschieht, sondern die unüberbietbar gewordene Fülle der Offenbarung sich durchsetzt und ausdrückt... 118

This text makes it clear that all development or "progress" in the time of the Church is nothing other than the on-going, personal transformation effected by the Holy Spirit as the inner power of the gestalt of Christ, God's self-revelation.

b. The Living Newness of Revelation in the Spirit

The Church and the Spirit must be seen as the single, two-fold way (*zwei-einige Weise*) in which the glorified Lord who has brought about the historical "eschaton" and passed through its limits is nonetheless present as the center of time and history.¹¹⁹ In the absolute freedom of the Spirit, he makes present the glory of God's redeeming love. But this Spirit is precisely the Spirit of Jesus Christ and all that which he works, mediates and interprets for and within the Church, is the absolutely unique, once-and-for-all reality of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's saving, trinitarian love. Thus for Balthasar the "more", the "excess" of the gestalt of Christ which is to be found in the gestalt of ecclesial word and sacrament in the living tradition of faith, is to be understood Christologically-pneumatologically and not quantitatively. The Spirit does not reveal new truths about God as if in revealing himself in the Son, the Father had still "held something back" for himself. The Spirit unfolds the fullness of the Paschal Mystery in its infinite dimensions. Therefore, "development" can only mean "unfolding" of the fullness already present in Christ.

The Son is the "exegesis" of God's love for the world, and the Holy Spirit who "interprets" and witnesses to this love will never go beyond God's final word of love on the cross of Christ. The Spirit will never cease to explore the depths of

this mystery.¹²⁰ As the Spirit illuminates new aspects of the mystery of God's revelation, the Church finds infinitely more in what God has "handed over" to the Church than what she thought or lived.¹²¹ But that which the Spirit "uncovers" can never contradict what has already come to light. The revelation of God must be "discovered" and "uncovered" ever-anew, but what is newly found is always rooted in Christ; specifically rooted in Christ as witnessed to in the Church's scripture. This is the real meaning for Balthasar of the principle *nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*.¹²²

Balthasar wants to stress that tradition is not a fearful holding onto ready-made forms and formulations. Truth that is merely handed on, without being rethought and reappropriated is a truth without living power, and therefore, hardly the work of the Holy Spirit!

Die Gegenprobe ist schnell gemacht: sie zeigt die ungeheure Verarmung, nicht nur an Geist und Leben, sondern auch ganz materiell an Gedanken und Gesichtspunkten, Themen und Einfällen, wo man sich begnügt, Tradition als Weitergeben fertiger Ergebnisse zu verstehen. 123

If tradition is to remain living and effective mediation of the Christ event in the power of the Spirit, then it is clear that theological reflection, honest prayer and meditation, and constant personal conversion are absolutely essential. Tradition is not genuine, and certainly not the work of the Spirit where it degenerates into a merely mechanical

though allegedly pious and faithful repetition of ecclesial formulations of the gospel.

The Spirit leads us to different perspectives and positions in order to reveal new dimensions of God's truth, and to lead us more deeply into its fullness. Balthasar uses the image of the globe to illustrate this. On the surface of the earth, there is no point from which one can see the world in one glance. One has to move around and see the whole in and through a variety of perspectives. In a similar way, the Spirit leads us into the fullness of God's truth which of its very nature cannot be grasped by one formulation or one perspective.¹²⁴

It is in this context that Balthasar understands what might (misleadingly) be called development of dogma. Even when the Church has solemnly defined a certain aspect of God's revelation, the work of theological reflection is not ended, but in many ways receives a new beginning.¹²⁵

The fullness of God's revelation cannot be captured even by a solemn definition. And it is precisely through the continuing reflection and practical experience of lived faith, that the Church is led by the Spirit to see new dimensions of God's revelation, which previous doctrine or dogma in spite of their truth, didn't notice. Balthasar emphasizes that the Spirit can in each new situation of the Church shed light on seemingly new "mysteries" out of the depth of the single mystery of salvation--aspects of which are already present, but not seen, understood or even

dreamed of. Already in 1952 Balthasar called for a renewed understanding of the work of the Spirit in the Church in this regard. Throughout the centuries it is the Holy Spirit who leads the Church ever more deeply into the truth of God's revelation. He throws light on new depths of the revelation, which previous generations certainly "saw" but nonetheless didn't "notice" or "register", in the same way that one can walk by a house every day for years and years without ever really observing it carefully.¹²⁶

In this sense, "progress" or "development" means to advance deeper into the fullness of the Christ event, not to go beyond it.¹²⁷

...ein Fortschritt durch meditativen Eindringen und Ausfalten des in der historia und littera (für Augustin ist beides eins) enthaltenen spiritus, aber ohne Verlassen der "Gleichzeitigkeit" mit Christus. 128

Thus the tradition of the *depositum fidei* in the Spirit is something living and dynamic, a sign both of the transcendence of God's truth and of the changing historical situations of the world.¹²⁹ God's truth in Jesus Christ may "stand over" all of time and history (*Überzeitlichkeit*) but that doesn't mean that it is a-historical and unrelated to the concrete situations of the Church and the world (*Unzeitlichkeit*).¹³⁰

The Spirit will take what is the Son's and declare

it to the Church, not with a slavish clinging to the letter, but with a sovereign freedom of expression that reveals the true life and power of God's Word: in the freedom and fidelity particular to the third person of the Trinity.¹³¹ What from the outside looks like "dead letter" shows itself from within as ever-free blowing Spirit, who in expressing God's Word, is creative enough never to have to repeat himself.¹³²

c. Freedom and Continuity

Besides being the power of God at work in the Church in unpredictably new and surprising ways, the Holy Spirit is the personal ground of the continuity in ecclesial tradition. But for Balthasar, the key point is precisely that this continuity lies in the person and so in the freedom of the Spirit. This demands a posture of faith, of obedience to the Spirit and not the effort to construct a system which claims to comprehend God's revelation in its entirety.¹³³ For this reason, Balthasar is sceptical of a "conclusion" theology which would approach the absolute mystery of God, convinced that with each step forward, in the on-going "development" of dogma, the field of unresearched divine truth would grow narrower, the faith needed to "understand" less necessary.¹³⁴ Just the opposite is true. The Spirit's mission is to prevent all narrowing, familiarizing and systematizing of God's Word by humanity. Through the Spirit, God's Word does not increase in

content, but it remains alive and active, "sharper than any two-edged sword". (*Heb 4, 12*)¹³⁵ God shows himself to be ever-greater.

...das, worüberhinaus nichts Größeres denkbar ist, ((kann)) von Menschen überhaupt nicht komprehensiv gedacht werden..., so daß die unendlichen Auslegungen, die der Geist Gottes durch die Geschichte hin bietet, nicht Wiederholung des schon Gewußten sind, sondern je neue Einführung in das Nie-zu-Bewältigende... 136

Thus the freedom of the Holy Spirit to reveal, in the most surprising and unpredictable ways, the mystery of the kenosis of the trinitarian love in Jesus Christ, does not "go beyond" this mystery, but serves to preserve it, keep it free and freeing in history, powerful enough to break through all human tendencies to tame or domesticate it.¹³⁷

d. Sacrament, Scripture and Tradition as Norms

No one particular system or conceptual formulation can be the norm in the Church. THE norm of the Church is the Spirit, who administers and impresses the infinite fullness of the mystery of Christ in the manifold dimensions of history and so leads history to its true end and fulfillment in Christ, its center and norm.¹³⁸

In stressing the fact that the Spirit is the final

norm in the Church as Lord of scripture, sacraments, and on-going tradition, Balthasar does not mean to suggest that the Spirit is "behind" or "beyond" these concrete forms. He is active in and through them. For all the freedom that Balthasar ascribes to the Spirit in the on-going life of the Church, he finally seems to give precedence to the "more formal" norms of sacrament, scripture and authoritative tradition¹³⁹, whereby scripture seems to have a certain pride of place.

It is true that in some places, Balthasar explicitly rejects a notion of the Church "under" the scriptures. The Church as the Body-Bride of Christ could not possibly have a higher instance over her than her Lord and Bridegroom.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, as we have seen, the Church itself gives birth to the scripture.¹⁴¹ Scripture is a part of the tradition of the Church in the broadest sense of the term. The scripture cannot have any authority "of its own" separated from the tradition.¹⁴² But in other contexts, Balthasar seems to emphasize the unique role of the scriptures "over" the Church, precisely as the Word of God and the Word of Christ her Head. The scriptures are born in and carried by the Church; she may present them to the faithful and interpret them.¹⁴³ But they are not the "work" or "product" of the Church or merely her "self-reflection", but the divine witness to something in the Church which is not the Church itself, but the risen Lord who is Spirit.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, while Balthasar agrees with other recent approaches¹⁴⁵ which see the scripture and the

Church in reciprocal unity and which understand scriptural inspiration as a peculiarly ecclesial charism and hold that the creation of the scripture is a constitutive element in the creation of the Church, he seems finally to give a special role to scripture as the criterion of authenticity of Church life and tradition. Tradition both in the theological development of doctrine and in officially defined dogma can only be the ever-new, contemporary translation of the biblical truth in the power of the Spirit.¹⁴⁶ In order to guard against error and ideology, the canon remains the unwavering norm according to which all subsequent "developments" can and must be measured.¹⁴⁷

Vom Ende der apostolischen Zeit an wird die Schrift das maßgebliche, verweisende Richtbild der Offenbarung in der Kirche, an dem die Wahrheit des Glaubens gemessen wird... Für den kirchlichen Glauben ist die *conversio ad Scripturam* die unentbehrliche "*conversio ad phantasma*" (zum objektiven Erscheinungsbild), wobei der Begriff des zu Glaubenden wie des zu Tuenden und die Einsicht in beides (*intellectus fidei*) ihr immer neu aufleuchtet. 148

6. TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT AS SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

The "progress" of on-going tradition in the Church, the fruit of theological meditation and reflection, and the "development" of doctrine, are understood by Balthasar neither as a "quantitative" increase in God's revelation nor as a

"qualitative" superseding of the Christ event in a new "Age of the Spirit". Progress (*Fortschritt*) whether in knowledge or in praxis, can only mean the step (*Schritt*) from death to resurrection, from mortal flesh to immortal Spirit, from the form of a slave assumed by the Son to the glory of the Spirit.¹⁴⁹ The incarnational forms of scripture and sacrament in the living, apostolic tradition of the Church are necessary, objective guarantees for the mediation of the Christ event throughout history. However, one cannot remain on the level of the "letter", whether in biblical fundamentalism, or in an empty sacramental ritualism, or in theological speculation and doctrinal definition. For Balthasar, all "objective" truth in the Church is grounded in the Spirit, who is the lived, existential truth of Christ.¹⁵⁰ Ecclesial existence demands the daily conversion from letter to Spirit, from the external-structural to the inner-existential dimension, from Law to Gospel, from the Old Covenant to the New. The "newness" which the Holy Spirit brings to the life of the Church is re-newal, a return to the fullness of the source: the life in Jesus Christ.¹⁵¹

...das Institutionelle und Sakramentale im Neuen Bund aus sich selber fordert, geistig (und dies heißt nach dem Wortgebrauch des Neuen Testaments "existentiell") interpretiert zu werden: nicht als abstrakter Vorgang ex opere operato allein, sondern als gelebtes Glaubensleben... 152

Thus the work of the Holy Spirit is not merely the objective re-presentation and universalization of

the Christ event through the Church of word and sacrament, but far more, the subjective actualization of the Christ event in the life of faith of each individual believer. This leads us directly to the subject of the next section of Part II of the present chapter.

B. SUBJECTIVE TRANSFORMATION IN THE CHURCH

1. COMMUNICATION: EXPRESSION--IMPRESSION

In the previous section we saw the role of the Holy Spirit in the objective re-presentation of the Christ event in the Church. The gestalt of the Church as a whole, and the mediating, ecclesially constitutive forms of scripture and sacrament (in the authoritative apostolic tradition) are instruments by means of which the Spirit expresses objectively what God has accomplished in the gestalt of Jesus Christ. But as we have often pointed out, the objective expression or re-presentation of God's saving, Incarnate Word in history has as its goal the subjective impression of the saving gestalt of Christ in the existence of individual believers. God reveals himself in a gestalt or form which in turn manifests its own inner power to trans-form.

Here one sees the enormous influence of Bonaventure upon Balthasar.¹ In Bonaventure one finds the central concepts of *expressio* and *impressio*

which, in Balthasar's opinion, distinguish Bonaventure's aesthetics in relation to the tradition² and which play such an important role in Balthasar's understanding of the Spirit.³ Bonaventure's experience of ecstasy as the enrapturing, transforming power of the objective, loving self-revelation of God in the form of Jesus Christ is central. It is the human realization of the objective revelation--by virtue of the revelation's own inner power--in the same way that one can only "grasp" a great work of art in its expressive power when one is grasped by it and drawn into it.⁴

In the context of the present study, it is worth mentioning that for Bonaventure, this way of experiencing God was crystallized in the image of the stigmatization of St. Francis. The Crucified is not merely to be contemplated in love. He actively expresses himself inasmuch as he impresses his wounds in Francis. The stigmata were not caused by Francis' love for the Crucified, but were solely from the power of the Crucified himself. And yet, Francis' love, his readiness to receive, made this expression-impression in the Spirit possible.⁵ This is a particularly good example of how Balthasar understands the role of the Holy Spirit in his mediating relationship between the Crucified Lord and the individual believer in the Church. The Spirit, by means of which God expresses himself in the crucified Son as self-surrendering trinitarian love, is also the one who leads those whom God loves, for whom he surrendered the Son, into the subjective realization of this love. The love expressed and given away objectively,

once and for all in the crucified humanity of the Son, is impressed and interiorized in human hearts by the Spirit.⁶

This is the eschatological mission of the Spirit. He is sent in order to transform the hearts of men and women, to inform, invest them with the form of Christ.⁷ The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the objective revelation of God in Jesus Christ and, as we saw in the previous section, the Spirit of the "objectification" of the gestalt of Christ in the forms of the Church with its offices, charisms, word and sacraments. In the present section, we shall see how the same Holy Spirit is the Spirit of "christian subjectivity" as faith, hope and love.⁸

Balthasar expresses this absolutely essential connection in a variety of ways. What God reveals to the world in his Son is no static truth or word, but saving act. What he accomplishes in the life, death and resurrection, is done "without consultation"; he sets the cross before the eyes of the world as an accomplished fact. But, he does this so that this saving event can be intrinsically realized in the intimacy of human hearts: "*den Herzen intimieren*",⁹ "*Intimierung der Logosoffenbarung durch das göttliche Pneuma*".¹⁰

The Father surrenders to the world what to him is most precious--his only Son; and yet, it is only through the power of the Spirit that those so richly graced can understand what has happened. What is "objectively" true in Christ can be "subjectively" understood and lived only when the love

of God is poured out into our hearts in the Holy Spirit.¹¹

It is the proper work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to perceive the gestalt of Christ for what it is, and perceiving it, acknowledge it not only as the form of God's self-surrendering trinitarian love but as the form of my "new" self in the power of this love. For Balthasar, this is what faith is all about.

2. FAITH AS PERCEPTION OF THE *OFFENBARUNGSGESTALT*

In the concrete gestalt of Jesus Christ, God reveals his glory: self-surrendering, trinitarian love, greater than which cannot be conceived. We have seen in Chapter Two how the Holy Spirit is the "shaper" (*Gestalter*) of the life-in-mission of Christ, the form "in-over" Jesus in which the trinitarian love assumes concrete gestalt in the world. Thus far in the present chapter, we have seen how the continuing mission of the Spirit is to universalize the Christ event throughout history by making it present in the concrete ecclesial forms of word and sacrament. Again, the Holy Spirit, the economic tendency of God toward gestalt, is responsible for the appearance of trinitarian love in history in concrete form.

a. Receptivity

The fundamental response to the gestalt which God places before humanity and in which he gives

himself away to humanity must be first and foremost the simple perception (*Wahrnehmung, Wahr-nehmen*) of this form and the recognition of what it truly is. In *Herrlichkeit*, Balthasar presents his theological aesthetics¹² in its two-fold structure: both as a doctrine of the perception of the gestalt of God in his self-revelation (*Erblickungslehre*) and as a doctrine of the Incarnation of God's glory and of the raising of man to rapturous participation in it (*Entrückungslehre*).¹³ These two dimensions correspond roughly to fundamental and dogmatic theology. In the first volume of this central work, *Schau der Gestalt*, Balthasar lays down the basic aesthetical principles of his theory of religious perception. The first task of theological aesthetics, he says, is a fundamental-theological one: to catch sight of the objective form of the self-revelation of God in the glory of his love, in the absolute gratuitousness that love and beauty have in common.¹⁴

Aesthesis, das Wahrnehmen, und Aestheton, das besondere, als strahlende Liebe Wahr-genommene, sind im Gegenstand der Theologie beisammen. 15

The posture required for perception and recognition of God's revelation is basically a contemplative, receptive one, which when confronted with the gestalt of Jesus Christ, accepts it for what it is, for the reality it reveals itself to be! Such an ability to perceive Jesus Christ as the revelation of divine trinitarian love is not so much grounded in the subjective spontaneity of the individual perceiver as in the receptive

openness and capacity that lets the revealing gestalt truly show itself as it is, before one tries to fit it into one's own predetermined categories.¹⁶

Nur er ((der Einstieg durch die Ästhetik)) kann das Göttliche als solches in den Blick bekommen, ohne es vorweg durch eine Zweckbeziehung auf den Kosmos (der unvollendet nach dem göttlichen Abschluß ruft) oder auf den Menschen (der noch unvollendbarer und in Sünde verloren einen Retter fordert) zu verunklären. Das Erste, um objektiv zu sehen, ist das "Sein-lassen" des Sich-zeigenden, und wäre dieses auch "die ewige Liebe für mich". Das Erste ist nicht Bewältigen des Anschauungsmaterials durch Kategorien des Subjekts, sondern Haltung des Dienstes am Objekt. 17

This posture of receptive openness is fundamental to every act of human knowing and loving and in every experience of beauty.¹⁸ Self-consciousness must be able to let the object or the "other" appear as the center of attention as other, so that it can truly reveal itself. One must let the gestalt which "shows" itself simply "be".

In order to recognize the appearance of divine, trinitarian love in the gestalt of Jesus Christ, more is needed than simply the fundamental receptive stance of perception. A special ability to see is required (*Sehkraft der Augen des Geistes*).¹⁹ Only so can one perceive the inner self-evidence of the gestalt of Christ.

b. Illumination

1) The Inner Light of Faith

Balthasar speaks of a "sensorium for God" which is the special work of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ a supernatural aesthetical sense²¹ which perceives the proportion and integrity of the gestalt of God's revelation in its own internal evidence and convincing power and recognizes it as the appearance of self-surrendering trinitarian love.²² This supernatural power to see, due to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the perceiver, is also called the "light of faith". It is primarily a divine light which illuminates man within, since God can be known in his most intimate reality as trinitarian love "only through God". It is God himself who shines in human hearts in order to give the "light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4, 6).²³ This light is a participation through the Holy Spirit in the vision which God has of himself.²⁴

2) The Splendor of the Gestalt: Evidence

Balthasar picks up on the doctrine of faith developed by P. Rousselot,²⁵ who influenced by Newman, spoke of a kind of induction whereby the human spirit, already essentially open and receptive to being, ordered toward God, is strengthened by the light of grace and so enabled to "see", to "read" the signs of revelation correctly. This inner light of

faith and the external historical revelation meet, recognize and strengthen each other. Balthasar notes that Rousselot speaks of "signs" rather than of gestalt and finds that Rousselot places too much stress on the active, synthetic role of the perceiver (believer). It is Balthasar's main concern to emphasize that although this light truly illuminates within, it has its source not in the perceiving subject, but "outside" him in the gestalt itself. This again, because of Balthasar's "objective" aesthetical approach. The beautiful shows itself in the mystery of the unity of gestalt and splendor: "convincing" form reveals inner splendor.²⁶

Das Schöne ist vor allem eine Gestalt, und das Licht fällt nicht von oben und aussen auf diese Gestalt, sondern bricht aus ihrem Innern hervor. Species und lumen sind in der Schönheit eins, wenn die species wirklich ihren Namen (der nicht nur irgendeine Form, sondern die gefällige, ausstrahlende Form bezeichnet) zurecht trägt. Die sichtbare Gestalt "verweist" nicht nur auf ein unsichtbares Tiefengeheimnis, sie ist dessen Erscheinung... Der Gehalt liegt nicht hinter der Gestalt, sondern in ihr. Wer die Gestalt nicht zu sehen und zu lesen vermag, der verfehlt ebendamit auch den Gehalt. Wem die Gestalt nicht einleuchtet, dem wird auch der Gehalt kein Licht werden. 27

This important text makes it clear that according to Balthasar, the gestalt of Christ, which God places before the world, carries its own "evidence" within itself and is able to show itself to the eyes of faith and to assert itself in supreme freedom as the splendor of the glory of God

appearing in concrete historical form.²⁸

For Balthasar, the gestalt of Christ carries a power to convince in itself in the sense that all that Jesus says and does, the preaching of the coming Kingdom of God and the healing of the sick, the absolute claim he makes with respect to his person and his message and the utter obedience and abandonment to the will of the Father who sent him--all of this "fits" together. Balthasar uses a musical concept to illustrate what he means. To "tune" a violin means to give the strings the correct pitch. When this is the case, one says that the violin is "in tune" or "tuned". Balthasar uses this term christologically in referring to the inner evidence of the gestalt of Christ. Christ's mission is "in tune" with his existence: (*es stimmt, Stimmigkeit*).²⁹ Thus, it is the utter "togetherness" or "correctness" or "integrity" or "attunement" of the gestalt of Christ that convinces, and not the satisfaction of some projection or need of the perceiving subject.

Die geschichtlich begegnende Gestalt ist *an sich selbst überzeugend*, weil das Licht, wodurch sie einleuchtet, von ihr selbst ausstrahlt und sich evidentermassen als ein solches, von der Sache her leuchtendes erweist. 30

c. The Objectivity of Faith

According to Balthasar, the concrete situation of

the perceiving subject can play a significant role in the actual process of seeing and recognizing. However, the objective evidence and convincing power of the gestalt of Christ in itself is in no way constituted by the concrete conditions of the perceiving subject. If Christ is who he presents himself to be, he cannot be so dependent that subjective conditions could hinder him from revealing himself. Nor can he be so defenseless that the human subject could, apart from his gracious self-revelation, understand and grasp who he is.

Das entscheidend Einleuchtende liegt dann bei ihm, und zwar in der doppelten Hinsicht: dass die Figur, die Christus bildet, an sich eine innere Richtigkeit und Evidenz hat, wie sie--auf anderem, rein-weltlichem Gebiet--ein Kunstwerk oder ein mathematischer Satz hat, und dass diese in den Verhältnissen der Sache liegende Richtigkeit zudem die Macht hat, von sich ausstrahlend in den auffassenden Menschen einzustrahlen, was keineswegs nur intellektuell, sondern existenz-verwandelnd gemeint ist. 31

This text contains the metaphor central to Balthasar's entire approach: the inner power of a great work of art. A work of art shows its greatness precisely in its ability to convince, to draw the observer into its own "world". One experiences being drawn out of one's self, being changed and somehow transformed by great art. In a similar way, the light which illumines the believer is the light which breaks forth in the splendor of the gestalt of Christ. It is simultaneously the condition for the possibility of seeing and that

which is seen.³² The light of faith comes from the object of revelation which reveals itself to the subject and draws the subject outside of itself into the realm of the revealing object.³³ The light of reason is not sufficient to illuminate the gestalt of Christ, and everyone who attempts to grasp it with this light falls short. Only in the light of the gestalt itself, says Balthasar, in the divine light of faith, can one see the gestalt as it is, and in such a way that the proof of the correctness and integrity of the gestalt appears in the gestalt itself.³⁴ "In your light, O Lord, we see light."

The "inner light" of the eyes of faith becomes one with the "outer light" which shines in the gestalt of Christ.³⁵ What does this mean? For Balthasar, the ability to believe, as the synthetic power to see the gestalt for what it is, is not primarily grounded in the believer himself, but in God, who in revealing himself, dwells within the believer and gives him a share in his own light.³⁶ Specifically, this power lies in Jesus Christ, not merely as a luminous external "object" of perception and belief, but as interior light which remains the center of the act of believing.

Die synthetische Kraft ... liegt für ihn in Jesus Christus, ((der)) ihm den Glauben so schenkt, dass das Zentrum in Christus bleibt. Das Zentrum nicht bloss des Gegenstandes, ohne den der Akt nicht bestünde, sondern auch des Aktes, ohne den der Gegenstand nie erreicht würde. Gott wird nur durch Gott erkannt. ... Nun erhellt endgültig, dass man die Aktseite (das, was wir das theologische Apriori des Glaubenslichts nannten) und die

Gegenstandseite (das Erblicken Christi als der Epiphanie Gottes) zwar unterscheiden aber niemals scheiden kann. ³⁷

The presence of Christ in the believer as interior light cannot be confused with the finite human spirit. Nonetheless one can speak of a union-in-difference which overcomes the dialectic of subject-object. It is the specific work of the Holy Spirit, who illuminates the gestalt of Christ both from "without" in the gestalt itself and from "within" as the trinitarian love poured out into our hearts.³⁸

One can come to faith only if one is ready to renounce one's own evidence and to surrender oneself to the gestalt and its evidence. God's revelation in Jesus Christ can only be experienced and recognized by one who is willing to be drawn out of himself, to be grasped by the power of the Spirit in the gestalt of Christ and to be drawn into the trinitarian love revealed there.³⁹ One cannot experience "from without", only from within.⁴⁰ Thus the "objectivity of faith"⁴¹ is grounded in the luminosity and power of Christ as the object of faith and as the center of the subjective act of believing. The two moments of faith experience (perception) and rapture flow into each other and cannot be separated. One can truly know and experience only when one commits oneself, allows oneself to be grasped.

Thus we have seen that on the one hand, the Holy Spirit is the Creator of the gestalt of God's

revelation in Jesus Christ: both as the shaper of the earthly mission of Jesus and as the shaper of the objective, on-going representation of the gestalt of Christ in the ecclesial forms of word and sacrament. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit is the gestalt's inner power and luminosity, which God graciously gives the believing subject, so that he can recognize the divine self-revelation for what it is. This recognition is directed toward existential transformation. The Holy Spirit who enables us to see and recognize the gestalt of Christ leads us into its truth in a process of transformation into the form of Christ:

"beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into his likeness..." (2 Cor 3, 18) This leads us to the meaning of faith experience as the transformative realization of the recognized gestalt in the life of the believer. Balthasar's theological notion of experience as transformative realization is brought out in a unique way in the German. Experience (*Erfahrung*) is not just a (psychological) "state" but a process (*Vorgang*) in which one is led into (*Einfahren*) the reality of Christ.

3. FAITH AND CHRISTIAN "EXPERIENCE"

a. Experience: A Theological Concept

It is in the first volume of his theological aesthetics, *Schau der Gestalt*, that Balthasar

presents his understanding of faith experience.⁴² It is immediately clear to the reader that he is not so much interested in particular subjective experiences of God in the ordinary sense of the term. He is not primarily concerned with experience as a subjective feeling or state. Following the work of J. Mouroux,⁴³ Balthasar develops a specifically theological notion of experience (*Erfahrung*) as the entrance (*Einfahren*) of the individual person, not into himself, not into his own best and greatest possibilities, but into the saving mystery of Christ. Experience in this sense is a kind of ontological movement into the reality of Christ. While there may be certain sensible, epistemological or psychic dimensions as well (since all human experience involves perception and reflection to some degree), the stress here is on the ontological actualization of the Christ event in the individual person, which is at the same time the ontological actualization of the person in the Christ event. Thus experience is "growing into the existence of Christ" (*Hineinwachsen in die Existenz Christi*).⁴⁴ This movement brings with it new insight: *Einsicht durch Fahrt*.⁴⁵

Jean Mouroux hat daher recht, immer wieder den strukturierten, kompositen Charakter christlicher Erfahrung zu betonen, die niemals auf einen einzelnen Inhalt oder Zustand, eine sinnliche oder geistige Empfindung, ein Gefühl oder Erlebnis festgelegt werden kann, sondern die progressive Einfahrt des glaubenden Menschen in die Gesamtwirklichkeit, ihre progressive "Realisierung" bedeutet. 46

Christian experience is the progressive transformation of the believer "until Christ be formed" in him. (*Gal* 4, 19) While one can and must investigate the more subjective, psychological side of religious experience, this is not Balthasar's main concern here.⁴⁷ He wishes to stress that Christian experience of God in Jesus Christ is not primarily directed within, to the "inner states" of the believer, but without, to Christ. This going away from oneself (*Von-sich-weg*) is absolutely fundamental to Christian experience as existence in Christ.⁴⁸ For Balthasar, this is the basis of experience of the Spirit and "spiritual life" as existence in the Spirit.⁴⁹

...christliche Existenz *erweist* sich und bewährt sich als eine Existenz, die darum "stimmt", weil sie Existenz im Glauben ist, daß heißt im Hingegebensein an den, der sich für uns hingegen hat... Die ganze Kraft des Beweises liegt vielmehr in dem "Nicht ich lebe, Christus lebt in mir", in dem objektiven, unüberholbaren Überspieltsein der ganzen Ich-Sphäre durch die Sphäre Christi... 50

b. In-formation

Here we see the two central moments of such Christian experience according to Balthasar: the surrender in love of the believer to God, who reveals himself in the form of the Incarnate Son, and the informing-transforming power of what "is believed", the *gestalt* of Christ. The fundamental posture of faith in the experience of God is the readiness

to receive this saving form; that is, the readiness to be transformed in Christ.⁵¹ This readiness, this disponability, is the central characteristic of biblical faith as response to God. Balthasar notes that the Bible does not know a word for religious "experience" precisely because it is not primarily interested in the religious sensibilities of man, but in his obedience with respect to God's revelation.⁵² Thus the concrete form of God's self-revelation in Christ remains the center and norm for Christian experience of God. Christian experience of the Spirit requires the obedient surrender to the form of Christ and to the form of his presence in the word and sacrament of the Church.

Vom Sohn aber ist die Kirche gestaltet, aus seinem Herzblut und Herzgedanken... Das Wort der Schrift und die Form der Sakramente, die von der Kirche verwaltet werden, sind nicht nur Licht vom Licht Christi, sondern Form von der Form Christi... Dies fordert die christliche Einstimmung nicht nur in Gott, sondern ebenso in Christus und in die Kirche. 53

The concrete forms of the Church in word and sacrament, in other words, are not merely neutral instruments used by the Spirit to convey something. They are in themselves the forms in which the Spirit impresses the life of God into the believers, making them into the likeness of Christ. Thus the challenge to Christians as they hear God's Word preached and receive the sacraments, is to accept readily and obediently what they hear and receive as the inner form of their lives.

This brings us to the central determination of faith as obedience, as self-surrender to the gestalt of Christ.

4. FAITH AS OBEDIENCE

We saw above that the self-revelation of God in the gestalt of Jesus Christ is the concrete, definitive expression to the world of who God is. This expression is from the very first intrinsically directed toward its universal, "defining" impression in the personal existence of human beings. Jesus Christ is the transformative revelation of who man is for God. Christ is revealed in the transformative power of the Spirit.

The first stage in this process of transformation or in-formation in Christ, is the perception and recognition of the gestalt or form of Christ for what it is. We saw how this requires a certain surrender of self to the *Offenbarungsgestalt*, a posture of receptivity, the acknowledgment of the truth and inner evidence of the gestalt. One must not only perceive (*wahrnehmen*); one must also recognize and acknowledge the truth which reveals itself (*wahr-sein-lassen*).

Hier vollendet sich die alttestamentliche Möglichkeit für den Menschen, im geöffneten Raum der göttlichen Treue zu wandeln und die Wahrheit Gottes zum Gesetz seines Daseins zu machen...: der letzte Grund dafür ist der Akt des Anerkennens, Geltenlassens, Wahrseinlassens der Wahrheit Gottes für mich, der Akt des Glaubens. 54

Here Balthasar speaks of faith as entrance into the inner reality of God, as the ability to live in and be supported by the fidelity of God's love. It means making this self-surrendering love the "law" of my own life.⁵⁵ This self-surrender is what Balthasar means by obedience. Obedience is the acceptance of what God has already accomplished in utterly gratuitous love, without first asking us, without reserve or consideration whether his incomprehensible kenosis would be reciprocated.⁵⁶ Here is where one can see the strong affinity to Barth and his understanding of faith as obedience to the sovereign act of God in Jesus Christ.⁵⁷

Mit der Liebe Gottes "kommt der Glaube" (Gal 3, 23.25) als eschatologisches Ereignis in die Welt, so sehr in Gottes Handeln in Christo und seinem verkündigenden Wort objektiv vorgegeben und darin eingeborgen, daß der Glaubensvollzug als Gehorsam an das Wort nichts ist als Gewährenlassen dessen, was seine "gestaltende Macht" mit sich bringt. 58

a. Recognition and Acknowledgment

This text shows clearly that faith experience is fundamentally seen as the process in which the believer, perceiving the gestalt of Christ for what it is, recognizes and acknowledges the demand of the truth of the divine love which reveals itself there, and so holds himself ready to be led more deeply into the mystery of the divine kenotic love. From the very beginning, therefore, the posture of faith is one of self-surrender and

obedience. This surrender of self is the only adequate "answer" to the love revealed on the cross. Balthasar stresses the existential aspect of this response. Faith is not merely the intellectual acceptance of information revealed by God about himself--information, say, which couldn't be known by the power of human reason alone. Faith is an existential response. More than the reasonable recognition of finite spirit that here there is something "greater than which nothing can be conceived", faith is the surrender of one's entire life to the Spirit who seeks to imbue and inform me with God's love.

Just as faith in the Old Testament was a total, existential obedience (*Lebensgehorsam*)⁵⁹ with respect to God's promise, faith in the New Covenant is an existential obedience with respect to the fulfillment of God's promise in the concrete form of Jesus Christ. This means the willingness to accept the gestalt of Christ as the form and norm of my own life, to allow myself to be "inserted" into the form of the Christ event.⁶⁰

b. The Faith of Christ

Here it is important to point out that the form of Christ does not remain some kind of external norm or model. Through the sacraments, primarily Baptism and Eucharist, the believer is given a real share, a real participation in the personal existence of Christ. Thus, says Balthasar, Baptism

as entrance into the community of believers is the objective investiture with the form of Christ. The Eucharist fulfills this process of formation, not as a voluntaristic "making myself into a likeness of Christ" (*Sich-Christus-Eingestalten*), but as a "letting myself be transformed into Christ" (*geschehenlassendes Sich-Eingestaltenlassen in Christus hinein*).⁶¹ In a sense, the believer is made into an *alter Christus*.

This means, for example, that the faith of the believer is ultimately grounded in the faith of Christ himself. The Spirit leads the believer into the innermost posture of Jesus before the Father: his faithful obedience. Thus faith, as the recognition and acceptance of the existential form of Christ (*Existenzform Christi*) as the form of my own existence, means the actualization of Christ's loving obedience before the Father. This is possible only "in Christ". The Spirit is the Creator of the personal, ontological union between Christ and the believer in which the believer is led into Christ's faithful obedience and is enabled to actualize it.⁶²

Das Wichtigste ist die Einsicht, daß christlicher Glaube sich nicht anders verstehen kann denn als Eingelassenwerden in Jesu innerste Haltung. 63

As we shall see, this has important consequences for Balthasar's understanding of representation (*Stellvertretung*).

The Incarnate Son's posture of faithful obedience is faith in its utter fullness (*Uberglaube*)⁶⁴ and through the Spirit poured out in grace, is the "metaphysical principle" of all posture before God.⁶⁵

5. LIFE IN CHRIST

a. Ontological Transformation

Faith, then, is entrance into the innermost posture of the Incarnate Son, participation in his relationship with the Father, a sharing in the very existence of Christ. We have already seen that life "in Christ" is existence "stamped", given form by the archetypal form of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. We have seen that this is to be understood far more deeply than just an imitation or copying of a pattern or model. The imitation of Christ would be a hopeless endeavor were it not for an ontological transformation of the believer in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. The active endeavor to imitate Christ, to follow the Lord (*Sich-gleich-Bilden*) is essentially founded in the willingness to allow the Spirit to accomplish his transforming work (*Sich-Bilden-Lassen*).⁶⁶ The outpouring of the Spirit into the disciples in the birth of the Church is the possibility for the believer to live and find his "place" in Christ.⁶⁷ According to Balthasar, Christ is the "place" where the Christian "stands"--not in an external

way like a geographically designated position-- but is Christ's personal, divine-human reality. To be "in" Christ means to live in the reality of the Lord in such a way that one is innerly determined and formed by him.⁶⁸

Das Wo des Christen ist Christus selber, so wie das Wo Christi der Vater ist. Dieses Wo...ist eine Neubestimmung der gesamten Existenz der Berufenen, so daß diese durch die Einsetzung in den Stand Christi ihre endgültige personale, alles übrige in sich absorbierende und relativierende Bestimmung erhalten. 69

The innermost reality of the Lord is the Spirit of love surrendered from the cross and poured into the Church. Thus Balthasar, following Guardini,⁷⁰ speaks of a reciprocal indwelling (*gegenseitige Inexistenz*): the believer lives in the realm of the Spirit and the Spirit dwells in him. The believer's existence is ontologically determined by this mutual indwelling. The presence of the Spirit is the fruit of the objectively executed word of redemption by the Son. The believer's life is progressively formed and shaped by the Spirit who subjectively actualizes this accomplished event in the personal freedom of the believer in the on-going work of sanctification.⁷¹ Thus "participation in the Spirit" and having "one mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus" (*Phil 2, 1.5*) are essentially one and the same thing. Existence in the "form of Christ" is existence in and with Christ through the Spirit,⁷² poured into our hearts as the new, living law of love.⁷³

b. Expropriation--Appropriation

Another way that Balthasar describes this ontological transformation accomplished by the Spirit is as a process of expropriation and appropriation (*Enteignung--Aneignung*).⁷⁴ We already saw that faith, beginning in the perception of God's self-revelation already implies and necessitates a movement of the perceiver "outside" of himself and "into" the reality of the self-revealing gestalt. This is not merely an external shifting of perspectives, but an internal transformation.

Die Entrückung aus dem Ich heraus, die der Glaube ist und durch die Liebe Christi erwirkt wird, ist nichts als ein Raumgeben für diese Liebe im Ich, eine Bestimmung der eigenen Existenz, die sich derjenigen des Gekreuzigten gleichgestalten läßt, so, "daß unsere Einbeziehung in das Leben Christi uns nicht nur äußerlich ausrichtet, sondern von innen her durch-dringt." ⁷⁵

Thus we are led out of the private existence of the "natural" realm⁷⁶, expropriated from the narrower and egoistic realm of sin and alienation from God,⁷⁷ and drawn into the inner love of the Trinity revealed in Jesus Christ.⁷⁸ This is a process by which the Spirit leads us into the realm of our true freedom, since the triune God is the only real source of life and freedom for the creature. Only insofar as the creature ratifies or "appropriates" the gestalt of true freedom as it appears in Christ and allows it to inform his existence, can he find his true identity and freedom.⁷⁹

c. Existence "for others"

This process of expropriation-appropriation is not to be understood individualistically. It is precisely the liberation from a private "individualism", being-for-me, into the only truly personal existence there is: existence in Christ as existence for others. For Balthasar this is understandable only in a trinitarian perspective. We saw in Chapter One that Balthasar picks up on the trinitarian theology of Richard of St. Victor and suggests a notion of personhood in the Trinity as "being-for-another"--pure "relatedness". The Holy Spirit is "being-for-each-other" in person and the gift of God's own self to humanity, "God's being for the world". It is this gift of God, the divine form of "being-for-another", that is impressed into the believer's heart. The more one allows the Spirit to form one's life, the more one is truly personalized in the deepest, trinitarian sense of the word. This new personal life as existence for others is the heart of the Church as *Communio* in the Spirit.

Bedenkt man nun, daß diese Gabe Gottes, die den Glaubenden die Form des göttlichen Für-einander einseht, das Wesen der Kirche und damit die unterscheidend christliche Form von Gemeinschaft grundlegt... Das Für-einander, das in der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen geschenkt wird, öffnet den Einzelnen umgekehrt von der personalen Spitze her zu den andern hin. Und dies um so mehr, je tiefer die glaubende Person sich von dieser göttlichen Form des Für-einander bestimmen, einnehmen und gleichsam enteignen läßt. 80

The Spirit takes possession of the believer in order to free him for service, for the loving service which is the heart of Christ's existence-in-mission.⁸¹ Just as the Spirit, as the "divine expropriation" in person,⁸² was the active former of the kenotic existence for others of the Incarnate Son, so too, the same Spirit is the former of the kenotic process of expropriation in mission of those one with Christ.

This discussion of the transformation of personal existence through the Holy Spirit as existence "in Christ" has led us to the key relationship between personal union with Christ and mission.

6. LIFE IN CHRIST AND ECCLESIAL MISSION

Life "in Christ or life "in the Spirit" for Balthasar means a concrete, absolutely unique, personalizing share in the mission of Christ, in whom mission and personhood are one. Balthasar's notion is essentially Christological, and ultimately trinitarian, since it is based on the inner unity of the *processio* and the *missio* of the Son. The personal uniqueness of the Son in the immanent Trinity is his procession from the Father. The personal uniqueness of the Incarnate Son in the economic Trinity is the mission-existence he receives from the Father through the Spirit. Unlike the prophets of the Old Testament, in whom one can see the close connection between vocation, mission and personal existence,⁸³

it is only in Jesus that one finds the total identity of mission and person.⁸⁴ Jesus doesn't merely fulfill a mission in obedience to the Father, Jesus is the personal Word of the Father, his saving missive into the world.

a. Personhood and Mission

In a way analogous to the uniquely personal reality of the Word, the unique personhood of the individual human being is based on God's word to him, the divine vocation⁸⁵ or "idea" which God has for each human being.⁸⁶ For Balthasar, this is where the theological notion of person goes beyond a merely philosophical notion of man as spirit or as self-conscious subject. According to Balthasar, it is precisely in the unique vocation and mission from God that the individual discovers who he is as a unique person.⁸⁷

This happens concretely in Christ, the *Ur-Person*. In Christ, all human beings have the possibility to become persons by virtue of a specific sharing in the mission or vocation of Christ.⁸⁸ Personhood is analogous participation in the universal mission-existence of Christ.⁸⁹

Innerhalb der unvergleichbaren Einmaligkeit Christi, der als Einziger die Befugnis besitzt, Gott und sein Reich in der Welt zu repräsentieren, ist Raum für eine Analogie einmaliger personaler Sendungen, die aber nicht mehr, wie bei Christus, eine *Synthesis a priori* mit seiner Person darstellen,

sondern *aposteriori* mit den geschaffenen und erwählten Geistpersonen synthetisiert und von den Sündern nur teilweise angenommen und erfüllt oder ganz abgelehnt werden können. 90

This text makes it clear that the union in Christ and the corresponding analogous share in his mission which constitutes the true personal fulfillment of each individual, are absolutely gratuitous. It is the work of grace, and as such, the mystery of the Holy Spirit present in us. According to Balthasar, it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that God gives each one of us a concrete "future" corresponding to a unique mission and personal existence, and the inner power to actualize this future.⁹¹

b. Missions in the Church: Ecclesial Identity

It is in the Church that God concretely and explicitly shares the Spirit of Christ. It is in the Church that the believer concretely receives the "mission" which makes him or her a person in the theological sense of the term. In the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the believer is de-privatized, expropriated through the gift of the Spirit, and inserted into, appropriated for, the ministry of Christ, the personal gestalt of God's own engagement in the world.⁹² The believer receives the concrete form of his "ecclesial personality" from the Spirit in a way analogous to the mediation of the concrete personhood of the

Son by the Spirit "in-over" him.⁹³ "There are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit." (1 Cor 12, 4)

Balthasar speaks of a *Verkirchlichung* of the individual⁹⁴ refering to the notion of *anima ecclesiastica* found in Origen and Ambrose. The believer is drawn out of his narrow self-consciousness and led into a consciousness of the "We" of the whole Church. To the extent that the believer allows the Spirit to lead him or her into the Paschal Mystery, to the extent that the believer dies and rises with Christ, he or she is led into the communion of saints and receives a new personal ecclesiastical identity.⁹⁵ This new "I" is the new consciousness of being sent with and in Christ, not the ego of psychology. Balthasar speaks of the *Ich der Sendung*.⁹⁶ St. Paul is a good example of this ecclesial consciousness.

Dieses Ich hat aber bei Damaskus begonnen: es ist das Ich der Sendung Christi, das zum Knecht Christi umgewandelte, aus "Fleisch" zu "Geist" gewordene, ekklesiastische Ich, das sich selber nur deshalb so enthüllt und deshalb vor aller Augen seine eigene Anatomie vollzieht, weil es Paradigma der Sendung, der kirchlichen Funktionalität, der Gliedschaft am Leibe Christi geworden ist. 97

The new ecclesial identity is expressed in the particular charism bestowed by the Spirit. The grace of trinitarian life given by the Spirit is not only the most common (the life of the Church as a whole as the mystical Body of Christ), but also the most specific (the utterly personal grace of

vocation and charism).⁹⁸

Die (allgemeine) charis ist also notwendig zugleich (besonderes) charisma. ⁹⁹

Thus membership in the Church is not merely participation in a general, undifferentiated medium of grace, but personal existence as a particular "member" of the Body of Christ in the new *analogia personalitatis* of life in the Spirit.¹⁰⁰ The Spirit bestows his gifts upon all as he sees fit, according to the *analogia fidei*. (Rom 12, 6)¹⁰¹ Each member of the one body has a particular vocation, a particular form in which he is called to reveal and mediate the trinitarian love in the world. Thus in the one body, there are varieties of gifts, service and workings, all grounded in the same Spirit. These particular charisms, the various ecclesial ministries and offices are what make out the particular ecclesial personality of each believer.¹⁰² Holiness is nothing else but the acceptance of this form and function as one's divinely willed personal mission, and the active readiness to allow God to actualize it.¹⁰³ Holiness is the lived integrity of person and mission, analogous to the utter identity between person and mission in the loving obedience of Christ.

c. Mystical Union and Apostolic Mission

Personal holiness, therefore, is not just "mystical"

union with Christ. The Spirit, the personal gift of God's life as grace, which penetrates the Christian and effects his or her union with Christ, is the Spirit of mission. Personal holiness and apostolic function or mission cannot be separated. The spiritual life is always both "mystical" and "apostolic": union with Christ in his saving mission for the world. Balthasar would distinguish the general grace of holiness (*charis*) from the specific gifts of the Spirit directed toward the upbuilding of the Church (charisms), but emphasizes their inner unity. The personal holiness of the believer is not his "possession"; it is the presence in the individual of the Spirit who is the soul of the entire Church. The fruit of the Spirit's presence in each individual is directed toward the life of the Church as a whole. On the other hand, all particular charisms bestowed by the Spirit, all specific offices or functions in the Church are innerly directed to, and demand growth in, personal holiness.¹⁰⁴

In this regard it is worth noting that Balthasar, against a long tradition, emphasizes the inner unity of Christian mysticism and ecclesial charism.¹⁰⁵ All gifts of the Spirit, even those which involve the most unique personal dimensions and experiences of union with God, are given for service and mission in the Church as a whole, and through the Church for the salvation of the world.¹⁰⁶

d. Mission: Obedience to the Spirit

Balthasar's emphasis on the apostolic orientation of life in the Spirit, precisely as life in the mission-existence of Christ, sheds light on the significance of obedience. We have already seen how Balthasar sees the act of faith as an act of self-surrender or obedience before God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Now it becomes clear that this obedience and self-surrender is not simply an isolated act, but must characterize the entire, on-going life of faith, precisely as existence in mission. The fundamental posture of Christian existence must be the same self-surrendering obedience of the Son to the Father in the Spirit. The believer must surrender his "private" self and respond to a concrete calling from God in order to truly "come to himself".¹⁰⁷ Christianity is not a "way of perfection" in the sense of a teaching or method to be mastered in order to achieve "holiness". "Imitation of Christ" does not mean the attempt to produce a carbon copy of the Lord's life in one's own existence, but to live in the same divine mission-obedience.¹⁰⁸

But one can neither program nor predict the Spirit. It is precisely the freedom of the Spirit which demands obedience on the part of the believer. Throughout the history of the Church, it is the mission of the Spirit to universalize and actualize the Christ event in ever new concrete forms in the lives of believers.¹⁰⁹ In each new situation, the Spirit mediates concrete, unforeseeable missions

from God.¹¹⁰ The dramatic confrontation between infinite and finite freedom, a meeting in which God shows the world the depth of his love and the power of his freedom, reaches its peak in Jesus Christ, and in the time of the Church, continues on, "in Christ". God can respond to the concrete, historical developments of the Church through the Holy Spirit. He can, for example, raise up new ecclesial forms of Christian life, or give the Church the illuminating and reforming example of a great saint, or grant particular individuals a unique share in the earthly experience of the Lord, or raise up great theologians at critical junctures in the Church's history.¹¹¹

Der Geist gibt auf die brennenden Fragen der Zeit das Stich- und Lösungswort. Niemals in Form einer abstrakten Abhandlung...fast stets in Gestalt einer neuen, konkreten, übernatürlichen Sendung... Die Sendungen der Heiligen sind so sehr Antwort von oben auf die Fragen von unten, daß sie nicht selten zunächst als das Unverständliche wirken, als Zeichen, denen im Namen aller Rechtenden widersprochen werden muß, bis der "Beweis der Kraft" erbracht ist. 112

The point is that the Spirit "who blows where he wills" is no diffuse, timeless and ubiquitous "Christ-like" atmosphere. The Spirit is not an objective, abstract medium, but a living person, who in absolute freedom mediates the concrete will of God in ever-new forms, in ever-new situations.¹¹³ A Christian, a true *Pneumatikos*, must be ready to meet the unexpected. "Spirit-filled" is not he who claims to possess and predict the

Spirit, but he who is possessed, who lives in obedience to the Spirit. This is true both for the individual and for the Church as a whole. The individual cannot simply choose out some particular function or strive after one particular charism or seek out one particular aspect of the Lord's life which he wishes to imitate--as if he "possessed" or controlled the Lord. The Spirit, not the individual believer, is Lord and the Spirit is the one who forms the life of the Christian in a particular way.¹¹⁴ The Church as a whole, for its part, cannot "produce" specific vocations or charisms herself or demand them of God. She must wait in unceasing prayer, ready to receive them obediently as a gift from the Spirit who concretely shapes the life of the Body of Christ.¹¹⁵

e. Ecclesial Obedience

The obedience to the Spirit about which we have been speaking is ecclesial obedience precisely because the Spirit mediates the saving mission of Christ in concrete ecclesial forms and within the concrete ecclesial communion. In particular, Balthasar sees obedience to the hierarchy as a concrete expression of the obedient posture of the Church as a whole, and of each individual believer before the Lord. This posture is exemplified in Mary: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy will". (*Luke 1, 38*) Nonetheless, it is clear from the above that for Balthasar, the function of

authority in the hierarchical Church cannot be to create and determine vocations and charisms. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. The hierarchy must strive to recognize the work of the Spirit in various vocations and ministries and to support and coordinate them for the good of the whole community. This is the ultimate justification for authority in Church life and why the obedience to the Spirit required of each Christian is to be concretely exercised in the Church.¹¹⁶ The presence of an authoritative hierarchy serves to remind the individual believer that through faith, a much deeper obedience to God is required of him than he would generally like to admit. It serves to represent and work for the unity of the various particular charisms and missions in Christ, and to remind those entrusted with talents by the Lord, that their gifts are not private privileges but means of service.¹¹⁷

Obedience which becomes separated from the fundamental Marian posture of the Church as a whole before the Lord, and the exercise of authority which no longer has as its goal the actualization of the missions and charisms actually mediated by the Spirit, is wrong.¹¹⁸ Balthasar admits that there have always been times when the Church has failed in this respect and points out, in view of the remaining sinfulness of believers, the necessity of on-going criticism and reform.¹¹⁹ He speaks of the "duty of contestation" and of "opposition which must take place in love and for the benefit of the unity in love of the whole Church".¹²⁰

Criticism which is born of love--that is what Balthasar is speaking about. Here one sees Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*¹²¹ and the personal relationship of Paul to the communities he founded.¹²² We saw above how Balthasar attributes a special role in this regard to the Johannine dimension of the Church. It is the Holy Spirit who holds the Church together in the union of love, and therefore the more one allows this Spirit to penetrate one's own life, the more appropriate one's criticism and desire for reform will be. For Balthasar, it is the saints who are the models of true criticism and reform in the Church.¹²³ After all, it is in the lives of the saints, that the Church is truly and fully actualized in the perfect integrity between person and mission.

7. THE SAINTS: OBJECTIVE FORM SUBJECTIVELY ACTUALIZED

Thus far we have seen that Christian discipleship as life "in the Spirit" has two moments: both the "mystical dimension" as the union of the believer with Christ, and in Christ, with other believers; and the "apostolic dimension", as the analogous participation of the believer in the saving mission of Christ. The Spirit which animates the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ is both the inner life of the Christian in grace and the concrete former or shaper of his ecclesial existence. It is precisely in the Christological-pneumatological form of the lives of believers, that the Spirit

makes present throughout history what the Father revealed once and for all in the Son. It is in the lives of believers, invested with the form of self-surrendering trinitarian love, that the Spirit accomplishes his work of glorification. For Balthasar, this is most evident in the lives of the saints. In this section, we have considered both the objective structures and forms of mediation of the Christ event in the Church and the subjective realization of the Christ event in the life of the *communio*. Both are aspects of the single work of the Spirit. In the saints, we see the unity of both dimensions: truly personal life as the subjective actualization of the form of Christ objectively mediated in the Church through word and sacrament. What is objectively offered and made present by God is recognized and realized in their response of faith.

((Die Kirche)) ist Kanon nicht nur in äußerlichen Dingen und Vorschriften, sondern gleichsehr in den innerlichen Vollzügen, wobei nur zu beachten ist, daß die Identität des Objektiven und des Subjektiven in der Kirche dort gesucht werden muß, wo es wirklich vorhanden ist...dort, wo, nach dem Gebet der Kirche, die *forma Christi* sich am besten in der Kirchenform durchsetzt und ausprägt: in Maria, in den Heiligen... 124

a. Canonical Existence

For Balthasar, the saints are the living tradition of the Church¹²⁵ where the divine truth of the Church remains secured.¹²⁶ The saints are seen

as the living, authentic interpretations of the Gospel, commentaries on the scriptures written by the Spirit himself.¹²⁷ As such, they are canonical forms for Church life.¹²⁸

As the fruit of the Spirit's mission of glorification, the saints are an integral part of the on-going revelation of God's glory. The world sees the transforming power of the gestalt of Christ in the lives of the saints. It is in the lives of the saints that the truth of the gestalt of Christ manifests its full, universal incarnational reality.

An der Heiligkeit der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen muß die Welt ablesen, was die Heiligkeit (das heißt Göttlichkeit) des fleischgewordenen Wortes auf Erden war. Ohne diese Heiligkeit des dargelebten Wortes hätte die Heiligkeit des angebeteten Wortes keine volle Menschwerdungs-Wahrheit mehr. 129

The canonical existence of the saints, however, does not mean dogmatic fixation of one particular form. All is the work of the Spirit who "blows where he wills", opening up ever-new dimensions of the mystery of God's revelation in Christ. Thus the Spirit can raise up new saints as forms of ecclesial existence in every age: new forms of discipleship given for the upbuilding of the Church in view of the particular, concrete, historical situation.¹³⁰

b. Theological Existence

Balthasar goes further to suggest that the saints are important *loci theologici*. They are "theological existences".¹³¹ Christology, for example, can and must be enriched by the faith-experience of the Church, particularly the specially graced experiences of the saints.¹³² Balthasar laments the fact that the experiences of many of the great saints, especially those who have had experiences of the "dark night", have not really been seen as subject for dogmatic reflection. God reveals the depths of the mystery of the humanity of his Son in such experiences. It is well known, for example, (and not unproblematic!) that Balthasar's own theology, in particular the Christology with its center in Holy Saturday, is radically influenced by the mystical experiences of Adrienne von Speyer.¹³³ Whatever may be the particular difficulties in a concrete case, Balthasar's call to concrete experience as a basis for theological reflection is urgent and timely. It remains an important task for theologians to develop a method of interpretation or "exegesis", according to which the theological significance of the lives of the saints can be brought to light and fruitfully examined.

In the experiences of the saints, God gives the Church concrete participation in the experience of the Incarnate Son. We recall what we saw above about the sacraments as mediation of various aspects of the Son's earthly life. While the subjective experiences of the saints can never function

in the objectively normative way that scripture and sacrament do, they nonetheless function interpretatively as the work of the Spirit, giving believers new insight into and appreciation for what is actually mediated in the "official" forms of the Church.¹³⁴

Daß die objektive Offenbarung mit dem Tod der Apostel abgeschlossen ist, besagt ja nicht, daß sich in der Kirche der Heiligen nichts von dem, was Offenbarung betrifft, ereignet: wenn sich dauernd die Wunder der Absolution und der Konsekration ereignen, die die immer neue Präsenz des Ereignisses von Golgotha und Ostern inmitten der Kirche aktualisieren, wie sollte es mit der Vergegenwärtigung der theologischen Existenz seiner Gläubigen und Heiligen anders sein? 135

One sees here the catholic fullness which characterizes Balthasar's understanding of the Church. While the objective, "structural" forms of mediation of the Christ event are constitutive of the Church, it is clear that one cannot simply reduce the reality of the Church to these structures. The living fullness of the Church in the Spirit of Christ can be reduced neither to *sola scriptura* nor *solum sacramentum*. The living *communio in Christo* is grounded in the Spirit mediated through scripture and sacrament, and is in turn the real "proof" that the Spirit is actually mediated through these forms. It is to be hoped that as the Catholic Church continues to "rediscover" the scripture as an important form of the "real"

presence of Christ, she might also be able to rediscover the significance of the saints in the life of the Church as living forms of the "real" presence of Christ. While it is certainly true that the concrete "place" of the saints in the life of the Church, for example, in various popular devotions, has at times been problematic and even characterized by bad theology and excess, still, it is a pity that in the Church today, the revelation of God in the lives of the saints has for most people, little or no existential significance. Perhaps another task for theologians and for preachers is to find new ways to open up the existential significance of the saints for faith. As Balthasar has often pointed out, one is often faced with the choice between pious hagiographical kitsch and dry, theological hair-splitting.

8. SUMMARY

We might sum up all that we have said about life in the Spirit with the title of one of Balthasar's most beautiful books, *In Gottes Einsatz Leben* (Engagement with God).¹³⁶ God's absolutely gratuitous act in history in Jesus Christ is the redemption of the world, the revelation of and invitation into the absolute freedom of the Trinity, as the only "place" where finite freedom can unfold and find its own true perfection.¹³⁷ The liberation of human freedom occurs in Jesus Christ. Here, divine freedom is revealed as the loving obedient

self-surrender of the Son to the will of the Father, concretely mediated by the Spirit. The Christian believer participates in true, divine freedom only as an analogous sharing in the freedom of Christ; that is, as a sharing in the loving, obedient mission-existence of Christ. The grace of God, which effects--and is--the freedom of the believer, and which concretely constitutes his unique personhood before God, is always a personal vocation, a calling or mission concretely mediated in the Church.¹³⁸ Through and in the Church, the form of God's engagement (*Einsatz*) in the world in Jesus Christ is mediated as a possible form for human engagement with God for the world.¹³⁹ Christian life in the Spirit is existence in Christ's mission of redemption. This is only possible to the extent that the believer is willing to allow the Spirit to shape and form his life according to the gestalt of Christ: both "objectively" in the sacramental transformation through Baptism and Eucharist, and "subjectively" in the required personal actualization of these sacramental events.¹⁴⁰

The vocation of the Christian is to "leave everything" and to live in the divine love which "left everything", which "emptied itself" taking on the form of a slave in the crucified one. In so doing, the believer receives a unique share in Christ's mission, and a share in the power of his Spirit to carry on his work in the world. We shall look at this more closely in the second half of this study.

III. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

A. THE ABSOLUTENESS OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH

1. ABSOLUTE FULLNESS

Jesus Christ is God's saving act in history. He is God's complete, final and unsurpassable self-surrender to the world. Wishing to avoid what he considers to be the Hegelian implications of the term, and what seem to be the negative connotations of its modern usage, Balthasar understands the absoluteness of Christianity from these three biblically grounded perspectives.¹ In Jesus Christ is the utter fullness (*p̄lērōma*) of God, infinite fullness which is at the same time the graciously given fulfillment of the finite world. The mediation of this fullness is the reality and mission of the Church. Secondly, one can speak of the absoluteness of Christianity in the biblical sense of *eschaton*. Christ is the final, irrevocable self-revelation of God, and as the "eschatos Adam" at the same time the revelation of the final reality of man.² Finally, one can speak of the absoluteness of Christianity in view of the unsurpassability of God's loving self-revelation and self-surrender to the world. God gives his total fullness. (*Jo 3, 16; Rom 8, 32; Eph 3, 19*) All in all, the biblical expressions which can serve as a possible understanding of the non-biblical term "absoluteness" refer to final fullness

of God and the total fulfillment of the world
in Jesus Christ.

...sie meint letzte Fülle durch Integration alles
Vorläufigen und Teilhaften, und in diesem
Sinn "Totalität". 3

It is from this background that Balthasar
understands the catholicity or universality of
the Church as the particular work of the Spirit
who is the utter fullness of God in person.
To be sure, when one looks at Christianity today,
it seems at best paradoxical and at worst impossible
to speak of the universality of the Church! How
can the Church make such a claim?

First, Balthasar insists that Christian catholicity
has nothing to do with numbers and "worldly"
success.⁴ His approach is not "empirical" but
Christological-pneumatological. The Church is
the Body-Bride of Christ, the community of all those
called into saving personal union with Christ.
But to live "in Christ", to live "in the Spirit"
is, as we have seen, to be sent out, to live
obediently in God's own personal, saving action on
behalf of the whole world.⁵ The universality of
the Church is not merely a "claim" of the Church
but a part of her divinely constituted reality,
a reality which she is called to realize in
obedience--in mission.

Der paradoxe Anspruch der Kirche Christi auf
Katholizität ist somit keine selbstverantwortete

Anmaßung, sondern eine gehorsame Gleichgestaltung an den Anspruch ihres Stifters, auf ihn bezogen und durch seine mit ihr unterhaltene Beziehung gerechtfertigt. 6

The catholicity of the Church is thus clearly grounded in the absoluteness and universality of the Christ event. In its relationship to Christ, the Church is universal in its origin, its personal identity-in-mission and in its goal.

The origin of the Church, as we have already seen, is the absolute self-surrendering trinitarian love poured out on the cross and breathed into the apostles on Pentecost. The catholicity of the Church is understood Christologically-pneumatologically as the utter fullness of God which God bestows upon the world in the Spirit of the risen Lord. For Balthasar, as for Ignatius of Antioch, the Church is catholic because she is born of and possesses the fullness of God's Spirit.

The catholicity of the Church is further grounded in her identity-in-mission as the Body-Bride of Christ. As the Body of Christ, the Church is the lasting re-presentation and sacrament of God's unsurpassable saving love. Following Thomas, Balthasar sees the catholicity of the Church represented in its structure as the mediation of the salvation event in history. The fullness of God in Christ is expressed structurally in the sacramental, hierarchical and scriptural dimensions of the Church. As the administrator of all the

sacraments and the servant and proclaimer of the fullness of God's revelation, the Church in its structural unity reflects the unity and universality of God's revelation.

The personal identity of the Church is found not only in its being the Body of Christ, but also in its reality as his Bride. In Mary, the Church is the adequate partner, the perfect response to and acceptance of God's self-communication, which goes before and makes possible the response in faith of the individual. In this sense, Balthasar sees an element of the Church's catholicity in the utter fullness of the Marian holiness of the Church as a whole.

These two dimensions of the personal reality of the Church: the Petrine, sacramental unity of the Church and the Marian holiness of the Church are for Balthasar the two poles of the catholicity of the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ.⁷

Thus, for Balthasar, the fullness of Christ is not only "above" the Church as its origin, but also "within" the Church as its personal reality.⁸

The goal of the Church, its mission, is the universalization of the Christ event in history. For Balthasar, the fact that the Church is only "underway" to this goal, is no contradiction to her essential catholicity. The fact that the Church "grows" does not speak against its constitutive universality. In fact, the Christologically founded, eschatological universality of the Church is what enables her to accomplish

her universalizing mission in history. Thus it becomes clear that for Balthasar, the catholicity of the Church is an eschatological reality: already real and grounded in Christ, it nonetheless exists in a dramatic time between the first and second coming of Christ, and is therefore called to become what it is--to strive after that fullness which it has not yet realized.

The Church is in this sense *sacramentum mundi*, sacrament of salvation for the entire world. In her personal identity-in-mission, she is essentially and constitutively directed beyond herself to all humanity. Balthasar speaks of a dialectical relationship between the immanent upbuilding of the Church as the people of God and its self-transcending impact in the world.⁹ In this growth, the Church mirrors the ever-greater fullness of God's love.

2. DEFICIENT CATHOLICITY

In defending the Church's character and claim to catholicity, Balthasar is careful to point out that the Church's unity and universality lie in Christ and not in herself. Precisely in fulfilling her mission, the Church is called upon to realize her universality. This is exactly the Pauline relationship between the indicative and imperative character of life in the Spirit.¹⁰

Die Kirche ist katholisch, weil sie, um ihre de jure bestehende Universalität wissend, de facto universal

werden will. Ihre Katholizität ist ihre Berufung, die eins ist mit ihrem Wesen. 11

Indeed, it is only to the degree that the Church remains open to the Spirit of Christ's fullness, sent to lead us into all truth, that she can actualize her constitutive unity and universality.¹² Being "open to the Spirit" means far more than being "open-minded". It means actualizing personally the "Yes" of Mary. It means being ready and willing to be led into the mystery of the trinitarian love revealed on the cross of Christ. It is here that Balthasar seeks to explain the factual discrepancy with regard to the catholicity of the Church. Apart from the special case of the rejection of Christ by the Jews¹³ Balthasar speaks of "deficient catholicity" wherever sinful man does not fully correspond to the graciously given fullness of God in Christ, present and mediated in the Church.¹⁴ For Balthasar, as for Barth, division in the Church, the existence of different "confessions" or "churches", is the result of sin¹⁵ and cannot be understood as a sign of the richness and plurality of God's grace. There can be only one Church, since there is only one Lord who has but one Body and Bride.

3. ONE BODY--MANY CHURCHES?

Here is where the fact of division reveals itself as the impossible possibility! In the present

study it is impossible to enter into this problem in detail. Moreover, since Balthasar has concluded *Herrlichkeit* without the planned volume on ecumenism, we are left with only a few shorter essays which deal with the relationship between the various Christian communities. Here it must suffice to say that Balthasar consciously follows Vatican II.¹⁶ Briefly put, the Council taught that the fullness of the reality of salvation, and the concrete ecclesial forms of mediation of salvation are present in the Catholic Church alone. Nonetheless, all baptised persons are rightly called Christians, and are considered brothers and sisters in the faith by the Catholic Church. The Spirit is active outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church in the scripture, in Christian life and in other visible gifts of the Spirit. While, however, a certain positivity can be attributed to the other churches because of the active presence of the Spirit, there is nothing "positive" to be found in the fact of the existence of separated churches.¹⁷ The salvation which the Spirit actualizes is the union of all things in Christ. This reconciliation must be manifested above all in the restoration of the unity of the Church.

4. *ECCLESIA SEMPER REFORMANDA*

In closing, it is important to note that the "guilt" of schism is carried by all parties concerned and that for Balthasar, the Church in her essential catholicity is underway to the

fullness of her reality. He seems to imply that even in the Catholic Church, it is always a relative and deficient catholicity that is concretely manifested and lived.

Weil aber selbst da, wo Kirche strebend zu sich selbst unterwegs ist, immer nur eine relative und defiziente Katholizität vorhanden sein kann, wird auch für Ärgernisnehmen immer Anlaß sein.¹⁸

Balthasar points out how partial and deficient the actual participation of many Catholics is in the "fullness" of their Church, while many Christians in other confessions make far better use of the means of salvation available to them.¹⁹

As Balthasar puts it, the gift (*Vorgabe*) of the fullness of Christ which constitutes the Church is itself the basis of the on-going demand that the Church live and actualize this fullness, and so, in the power of the Spirit mediate it to others (*Übergabe*). In Mary and in the saints the lived fullness manifests the full catholicity of the Church. Wherever sinful man does not live in correspondence to the fullness of Christ's self-surrender, the catholicity of the Church is deficient.

Sofern die Kirche aus Sündern besteht, kann sie auf ihre Katholizität nie anders hinweisen als auf den Indikativ, der in der realen Vorgabe der Fülle Christi liegt, sie kann aber nie

verweisen auf die durch sie selbst vollbrachte Synthese dieses Indikativs mit dem darin an sie gerichteten Imperativ. 20

The Church remains *Catholica semper reformanda*. The paradox is that the Church, as the empirical Church of sinners, always falls short of the fullness from which she comes and toward which she must strive, and yet this fullness which is Christ himself is not simply "behind" her or "above" her, but truly "within" her.²¹

B. THE CHURCH AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

From all that we have seen thus far, it is not surprising that for Balthasar, the eschatological act of God in Jesus Christ means the "objective end" of all other religions as he puts it.²²

All that God can say and give to man is surrendered completely and irrevocably in the Christ event.²³

To all other religions, insofar as they can be considered expressions of the human search for God and for reconciliation with God, Christianity proclaims the good news that man has been sought out and found by God. In the resurrection and ascension to the Father, Jesus fulfills the entire movement and direction of the "religions" to God.²⁴ Christianity is the end--as fulfillment--of all world religions.

The scandal of Christianity is precisely

the absolute, universal significance of the concrete, particular Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.²⁵ Thus Balthasar can write that while other, "pagan", religions might be very developed and contain many elements of truth, they are all still basically expressions of human questions which find their full answer only in "Christian universality". This "Christian universality" is not a summary or synthesis of various religious truths, but the single truth above them all which demands conversion: the Word of God, "full of grace and truth".²⁶

While Balthasar points out that the Church herself is underway, always striving toward the fullness of truth, he maintains that she cannot expect to find this fullness "outside" of herself or expect it in some "increment" from outside. Balthasar admits that this "fundamental truth" presents the Christian with "delicate problems"!²⁷ It certainly doesn't seem to be the kind of attitude which encourages mutual dialogue with other religions. On the one hand, in his own creaturely-finite reality and even more because of his sinful and forgetful consciousness, the Christian can and must receive impulses and complementary perspectives from other religions, cultures and even ideologies precisely because his consciousness is never adequate to the universality of Christianity. On the other hand, says Balthasar, the Christian must hold that the various *logoi spermatikoi* which he may find in other religions are already integrated in the fullness of Christ. Moreover, says Balthasar, in the existence apart from the fullness of God's revelation in Christ, they have

a more or less distorted character. It would seem that for Balthasar, nothing can be found outside of the Church which is of saving significance, which does not point to and find its true fulfillment in Christ.²⁸ Balthasar questions, for example, in view of recent interest in Eastern forms of meditation, whether Christians are fully aware of the richness of the tradition in their own Church.²⁹

Thus, in the drama (*Theodramatik*) between God and the world, the "world religions", in distinction to the Church and Israel, have no real theological mission or "personality", strictly speaking.³⁰ Only in the Church, where Jews and Greeks are one in the same Spirit and baptized into one and the same Body, is the fullness of truth.

1. CHURCH IN AND FOR THE WORLD

Before closing, we wish to point out that the absoluteness and universality of the Church so stressed by Balthasar do not necessarily lead him to an extreme, integralist notion of the Church in its relationship with religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition. It seems regrettable that Balthasar has written practically nothing on the other great world religions though. One must recognize that fact that Balthasar sees his task elsewhere.³¹ He does emphasize that a Christian, who should "live his faith existentially, convinced that Catholicity is unsurpassable...can in open dialogue learn much that is valid from

other religions" without having to "relativize the objective content of his faith".³² He admits that "God's free grace in Christ embraces all mankind" and can be "well received and lived by non-Christians".³³ Moreover, Balthasar emphasizes the world-orientation and missionary character of the Church. The Church does not exist for itself. It is solely mediation of God's universal saving love. The Church is sent out into the world to proclaim, to actualize and so, to universalize the Paschal Mystery. The Church is called, not to glorify itself, but to be a light for the world.

...denn die Kirche ... ist auch keine Ver-sammlung, sondern immer neu eine Ver-sendung (Apostolat von apostellein: fortschicken), eine Ver-streuung ("in alle Welt", Mt 28, 18-20, "bis an die Grenzen der Erde", Apg 1, 8; vgl. Jo 10, 3).³⁴

If it is true that the other world religions have no distinctively theological significance apart from Christianity, one can also say that the Church has no significance "in" and merely "for" itself, apart from the world! The world is so loved by God that he handed over his only Son to save it. And, one can recall from Balthasar's own understanding of person and mission, that the entire identity and significance of the Church is one with her mission in the world.

Balthasar makes this clear in another context when he stresses the provisional character of the Church. The Church is not only the ship of Peter

from which the nets will be thrown to catch all humanity (*John 21*). Like the ship of Paul which was destroyed at sea (*Acts 27*), the institutional Church will cease to exist at the end of the world when the Spirit has accomplished his economic mission to universalize the Paschal Mystery. Then the only mediation into the immediacy of the inner-trinitarian love will be the living "sacrament" of the risen humanity of Christ.³⁵

2. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?

In closing, we wish to relate all of this directly to the Spirit. There is no doubt that Balthasar sees the Spirit present and active throughout the entire cosmos. Not only does he refer to the patristic doctrine of the *logoi spermatikoi* manifested throughout the world because of its creation in and through Christ. He also emphasizes that God's free gift of grace, and this grace is nothing else but the Holy Spirit as God's freely given love, embraces all mankind and can be received and lived by non-Christians. Nonetheless, Balthasar places an unmistakable accent upon the Church as the single mediation of the Spirit of Christ in its fullness. The Spirit is not confined to the Church--how could God in his ever-greater, ever-new, ever-surprising Spirit be confined anywhere? But it is precisely in and through the Church that God pours out his Spirit for and into the world. The Church is the Body of Christ, "the fullness of him who fills all in all". (*Eph 1, 23*)

While much can be found in other religions and cultures which is helpful and is, in the concrete situation, the working of the Holy Spirit, still the other (non-Christian) religions cannot be viewed as other "ways" of salvation along with Christianity, willed by God.³⁶

Thus, following a distinction made by de Lubac in the controversy with Rahner about "anonymous Christianity", Balthasar insists that while there will always be individuals in other non-Christian religions who might rightly be called "anonymous Christians", precisely because they humbly seek and receive God's grace, one may not speak of an "anonymous Christianity", either as the implicit presence of grace in the created order, or in a way that would attribute comparable or complementary significance for salvation to other non-Christian religions.³⁷ This has always been Balthasar's concern in such discussions: to emphasize both the universality of the salvation accomplished in Christ and the unique identity and mission of the Church as mediator of salvation. Thus, already in *Schleifung der Bastionen* (1952) Balthasar points out how the Church rejects the exclusivistic interpretation of the proposition *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, and holds that there is grace and salvation outside the Church. The truth contained in the old proposition lies in the fact that the grace which is present in the world is present and offered through the Church.³⁸ Moreover, the Christian is called upon to adopt a new consciousness concerning his relationship to non-Christians. Whereas the Christian of the Middle Ages didn't

consider himself as Christian responsible for the non-Christians, Christians who are members of a Church which has torn down the external, isolating ramparts, and rediscovered her mission in the world, are reminded that they have been called in order to be sent out to the others. The Church, like her Head, has an essentially representative existence. She is there for the others.³⁹

This perspective remains in Balthasar's subsequent writings.⁴⁰ According to Balthasar one may deny neither the essentially unique saving significance of Christ, nor the essentially unique saving significance of the Church. On the other hand, one may not deny the universality of God's love and salvation and its effective presence outside the visible Church. Instead, Balthasar insists upon the representative mission of the Church in the world. Her unique identity as the on-going re-presentation of the universal saving love of God which has appeared in Christ should not lead to a "salvation-egoism"⁴¹, but to a deeper consciousness of her mission in service of the Gospel.⁴²

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS FULFILLER

We have seen how Balthasar understands the constitutive catholicity or universality of the Church from a Christological-pneumatological perspective in its origin, personal identity and mission. The factual

discrepancy between the universality which is constitutive of the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ and the Church as she appears in the world, torn by sin and division within, and one of many other "world religions" without, is a sign of the dramatic dialectical existence of the Church as an eschatological reality in history. The Church lives in the tension between the reconciliation accomplished once and for all in the first coming of Christ and the universal realization of the Paschal Mystery as the fulfillment of history.

Only because the Church is already universal as the Body-Bride of Christ is she capable of participating in his mission of universal reconciliation. She receives the Spirit of Christ and therefore is animated by a truly catholic, universalizing and integrating love. The Church lives in the power of this Spirit, whose mission it is to bring to fulfillment the fullness of grace revealed in Christ, until God is "all in all".⁴³ Only then is the Kingdom of God, proclaimed and established in the earthly mission of Christ, eschatologically present in the Church, accomplished in its fullness. The trinitarian love revealed on the cross is not a love "for a few" but the love of the Creator for the totality of his creation. Not just the Church, but the whole world is reconciled with God through the cross and resurrection of Christ.⁴⁴ Only when the fullness of creation is taken up into and transformed by the fullness of the Christ event, is the Spirit's work of glorification accomplished. Only then is the real power and glory of the self-surrendering trinitarian love

revealed in its utter fullness.

Katholisch ist die Einbringung des (positiven) Endlichen in die endgültige Totalität, in der "Gott alles in allen" (1 Kor 15, 28) sein wird, nicht anders vertretbar als durch Annahme der am Kreuz voll offenbarten (immanenten) göttlichen Trinität, die im Raum der Differenz zwischen dem Vater und dem von ihm verlassenen Sohn, welcher Raum von der wesenhaften Liebe beider, dem Heiligen Geist, offengehalten wird, die gesamte Schöpfung mit ihren Differenzen einzubergen vermag. ⁴⁵

The Spirit of love which is the heart of the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ in time will ever reach outside of itself--transcend itself--until the whole world is drawn into the love of God.⁴⁶ Indeed, for Balthasar, it is ultimately the Trinity, "kept open" for the world by the Holy Spirit in the love between Father and Son, which makes possible the saving, transforming fulfillment of the world. It is in the Spirit that the world, from all eternity, has its true "home". It is through the Spirit that the whole creation, united in the risen humanity of Christ, will be led from the alienation of sin back to its true home.⁴⁷ According to Balthasar, this is not to be understood as a process of *apokatastasis*.⁴⁸ In fact, Balthasar has often accented the dramatic nature of the ever-deepening confrontation between God and sin. The more the divine love reveals itself, the greater the opposition from the realm of sin and darkness.⁴⁹ The greater the engagement of the all-loving God for his guilty world,

the more vulnerable this love is, and the more unforgivable an offense against it.⁵⁰ One must take human freedom and the reality of the rejection of God's love through sin seriously. In this sense one must admit, at least theoretically, the reality of hell: i.e., the reality of free rejection of God. On the other hand, Balthasar never ceases to point out that this very freedom exists only within the all-encompassing freedom of God. This freedom is revealed on the cross of Christ, and in the descent into hell, as a love so great that it follows sinful man into the very depths of hell. In this sense, the love of God revealed on the cross is infinitely more "powerful" than all the sin of man. God can be God even in hell, wherefrom "by definition" man attempts to bar God. God never "gives up" on the sinner. In this sense while the Christian may not try to comfort himself with a cheap doctrine of *apokatastasis* as the "happy end" which trivializes the drama between God and the world, he is justified in having an eternal hope "which does not deceive" grounded in the cross of Christ "erected at the farthest end of hell".⁵¹ This is not the "certainty of salvation" of some speculative systematics, but the "hope which does not disappoint" (*Rom 5, 5*) because it is grounded in God's infinite mercy. Balthasar sees this revealed in modern times in an extraordinary way in the life and mission of Thérèse of Lisieux.⁵²

Grace neither trivializes nor destroys nature.⁵³
 Grace fulfills nature. The Holy Spirit is rightly called *Spiritus Creator* as the fulfiller of the redeemed creation. He is the divine

point of unity between nature and grace, between creation and redemption.⁵⁴ The order of nature is not complete in itself since the Father created all things through, with and for the Son. On the other hand, the order of grace cannot be something isolated "in itself", apart from the world, since the Son has become man in order to bring the redeemed world--in all the positivity of its finiteness--back to the Father, so that God can be all in all. From the very beginning, all of creation has been opened up in order to receive its fulfillment in God's own divine life.

Thus the Spirit transforms history into salvation history by leading finite freedom and all creation into its true fulfillment in Christ.⁵⁵ Through the Spirit, the finite world, created and loved by God precisely in its finiteness, shares in the fullness of God's own infinite freedom and love, for which it was created but which it could never achieve on its own.⁵⁶

In the Holy Spirit, there is a double movement to the saving love of God. In the Incarnation of the Son through the Spirit, God pours himself out into the world, and in the power of the same Spirit, leads his beloved world back to its true home in the eternal love between Father and Son.

P A R T T W O

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C H R I S T I A N S P I R I T U A L I T Y :

ITS ECCLESIOLOGICAL, CHRISTOLOGICAL
AND TRINITARIAN DIMENSIONS

INTRODUCTION

We have reached the end of the first part of this study. Its purpose was to come to a better understanding of the person and role of the Holy Spirit as presented in the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Our investigation was organized into three chapters corresponding to the three interrelated and inseparable aspects of the one, central mystery of our faith: Trinity, Incarnation and Church. We recall that the question concerning the person and role of the Spirit was motivated by another question which is the reason and starting point of the present study: "What is authentic Christian spirituality?" In order to come to a correct understanding of what "life in the Spirit" is for the Christian, we had to ask just "who" or "what" this Spirit is, in which the Christian lives.

Having done this, we are now in a position to proceed to the second part of our study which is the real focus of our interest. In the last chapter, in which our theme was the Holy Spirit and the Church, we already began to consider what life "in Christ" or life "in the Spirit" is. In the second part of this study, we shall take a closer look at Christian life "in the Spirit" in order to identify what Balthasar considers to be its essential characteristics. As we pointed out in the Introduction at the beginning of this study, we are not concerned with particular subjective experiences of the individual believer, nor

directly, with the history of spirituality in the Church. Further, it is not our intention to address the concrete problems which often arise in the life of the individual Christian nor to discuss the great variety of concrete forms of prayer and apostolate. We are concerned with the essential structures or dimensions of Christian life fundamental for all forms of life in the Spirit. That there are in fact certain essential structures or dimensions basic to what one might call authentic Christian spirituality in general is, for Balthasar, grounded not so much in the constitution of the believer, but in the constitutive, structural reality of God's revelation. The first part of this study shows how, for Balthasar, the inseparable unity of the Paschal Mystery in its trinitarian, incarnational (Christological) and ecclesiological dimensions is especially manifest from the perspective of the Holy Spirit. For Balthasar, therefore, it is clear that Christian spirituality has by its very nature, as grounded in the reality of God and his self-revelation, an essentially ecclesiological, an essentially Christological and an essentially trinitarian dimension. In the remainder of this study, we shall try to come to a better understanding of the nature and significance of each of these dimensions of authentic Christian spirituality.

Whereas the first part of this study is structured according to what one might call the ontological order of the event of God's self-revelation (Trinity-Incarnation-Church), the second part of

this study is organized according to what might be called the order of existential experience of God's revelation (Church-Incarnation-Trinity). This order is not necessarily the only possible one for such a study as we have undertaken. As we have often pointed out, we are treating of different aspects of one and the same reality. All three dimensions are interrelated; no one can be isolated and played off against the others. One advantage of the order of treatment in this second part is that each succeeding dimension can be seen as a deepening of the dimension before it. According to Balthasar, Christianity is not simply an "idea", but a concrete, living community: i.e., the Church. The ecclesial dimension of Christian life, however, is ultimately characterized by its sacramental reality and mission: to mediate effectively in history the living Christ event into which God calls all men and women. Thus the ecclesial dimension points to a fundamentally Christological dimension as its center and goal. The Christ event is nothing less than the opening up of the infinite love and freedom of the Trinity in the gracious invitation to the finite world to find its own last fulfillment there. That the world has a future and an eternal fulfillment in God himself is the heart of the trinitarian dimension of Christian life.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, it became clear that for Balthasar, the Church is preeminently the Body-Bride of Christ, animated and made fruitful by the Holy Spirit. Both the inner constitution and the continuing life-in-mission of the Church are the work of the Holy Spirit. As the continuing presence and mediation of the unique event of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Church is the only concrete place where the Christian meets Christ in his fullness.¹ The Church is the realm of the Spirit, the concrete place where God shares his own inner fullness of life with the individual believer.² Here it is that the Spirit concretely calls men and women into the new life and freedom revealed in the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Balthasar repeatedly stresses the fact that the self-revelation of God is not vague and formless. It has gestalt.³ The gestalt of the Incarnate Son is the final, irrevocable and unsurpassable form of God's self-revelation, given "in these last days". (*Heb 1, 1*) The concrete nature of God's revelation in the Incarnate Son is preserved in the incarnational reality of the Church, his Body-Bride. The Church is a concrete, historical reality with concrete gestalt. It is the concrete sacrament of God's presence in Christ for all men and women in all times. We saw how Balthasar calls the Church *sacramentum mundi*.⁴

The paradox between the utter fullness and universality

of God's infinite love and the finiteness and particularity of the form in which he reveals and communicates himself characterizes both the Incarnation of the eternal Son and the "continuation" of the Incarnation in the formation and animation of the Church by the Holy Spirit.⁵ The Incarnation reaches its fulfillment in the community of believers who are led into the fullness of truth of the Incarnation. Because Balthasar understands the relationship between the Incarnation and the constitution of the Church in this way, it is clear that for him, the Church is the medium in which the truth of God's love as revealed in the Paschal Mystery becomes "valid, understandable and obligatory" for the community of believers and for the world as a whole.⁶ Here is where participation in God's own life and freedom as revealed in Jesus Christ is possible and actual. In this sense, the Church is the sacrament of the Spirit. Balthasar speaks of the Church as the goal of the Incarnation, an event which from beginning to end is the work of the Spirit. It is not a goal "in and for itself", but as mediation and communication of God's Spirit, in and for the whole world.⁷

For Balthasar, the outpouring of the Spirit is identically the constitution of the Church. The Spirit is God's gift for the whole world, but it is given concretely, and in its fullness only through the Church. Thus, it is only in the Church as a whole that the individual can meet Jesus Christ and personally receive his Spirit.⁸

Moreover, it is only in the all-encompassing Marian response of the Church that each individual is enabled to respond in faith to God's self-revelation.⁹ In this sense, one could say that for Balthasar, the Church is a constitutive foundation for life in the Spirit, both as the constitutive, on-going, concrete "place" of God's self-revelation and communication, and as the constitutive, on-going, concrete "place" of man's recognition and acceptance of this revelation in its fullness. Here is where the individual receives the Holy Spirit and is drawn into the continuing process of the Incarnation.¹⁰ The spiritual life of the individual believer "in Christ", and therefore, Christian spirituality, are essentially ecclesial realities.

I. THE NEW LIFE OF THE SPIRIT: THE GIFT OF INTIMACY AND THE CALL TO FREEDOM

The Holy Spirit which is communicated in the Church is understood by Balthasar to be a participation in the eternal life of the Trinity.¹¹ The Spirit is both the giver of this life and the divine life itself as given.¹² Grace, or the participation in the divine life of the Trinity which we already have in the Church is not yet the participation in fullness, which can come only after death as an integral part of a Christian's share in the cross of Christ. Nonetheless, it is a real share in God's life, the "guarantee" and pledge of the fullness of our eschatological inheritance. (*Eph 1, 13f; Rom 8, 23; 2 Cor 5, 4f*) The life of the Spirit is both a gift already given and a challenge to the fullness not yet actualized. This "already-not yet" character of the presence of the Spirit in grace is constitutive

of Church life. In the Church, we are given the gift of God's Spirit and called to enter into this graced reality ever more deeply. The divine life which the Holy Spirit is and communicates is trinitarian love. This love reveals itself as absolute ("ever-greater") freedom in utter self-surrender.¹³ Life "in the Spirit" is a participation in God's freedom and in his own self-surrender. The gift of intimate union with God and participation in his divine freedom is actualized precisely in the measure that the believer enters into the self-surrendering posture of the Son. In the Church, this means concretely: authentic Church life in the Spirit is characterized both by the freedom and spontaneity of the Spirit and by the self-surrendering union-in-love which the Spirit is and effects. The path to true freedom and intimacy with God is the self-surrender in love which lays down its life for the beloved.

In the Church, this path is begun with the sacrament of Baptism. The individual is drawn into the trinitarian love through the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is given us on the cross, and Baptism is precisely the gift of and call to the freedom and intimacy of the love revealed on the cross. The believer is called to die with Christ in order to be born anew in the Spirit.

In the Spirit, we are drawn into a new and intimate relationship with God, in which we call him "Abba, Father" and so share in a unique way the absolute freedom of the Father poured out in the Son. This freedom is expression of the intimacy and immediacy

of the relationship between the Christian and God. It is a new freedom from the Law which stood between the individual and God.¹⁴ Paul expresses the freedom and intimacy of this relationship with God dramatically: "The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one." (1 Cor 2, 15) And yet, the divine freedom of the Son, in which the Christian participates through the Spirit, is at the same time a freedom which is completely accepted and surrendered in love to the will of the Father from whom it comes. On the cross of the Incarnate Son, God reveals his utter freedom as absolute self-surrender in love to the world. This is why the utter freedom of the believer in the Spirit, in his intimacy and immediacy to God, will always express itself concretely in self-surrendering love for the brethren--if it is truly Christian freedom. Ultimately, the surrender to God's will and the self-forgetful love within the community are one, since God's will is precisely the reconciliation of all men and women in the Son.

The individual is actually called into a new personal existence through Baptism. The gift of the Spirit comes as an utterly personal word of love, a uniquely personal address (*ein bestimmtes unverwechselbares Du*) which expresses his personal reality before God.¹⁵ Balthasar emphasizes however, that each personal existence within the Church, as it is formed and specially enriched through the gift and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, is not private. The uniquely personal existence of the believer is existence "for others"--for the whole community. In this sense, the "Christian

rhythm" between individual and community in the Church is a real likeness of the inner-trinitarian life, precisely in the reciprocity between the uniqueness of the person and the uniqueness of his self-sacrifice for the community.¹⁶ Understood in this way, the freedom and the self-surrender to which the Christian is called in the Church, beginning with Baptism, are not opposed to each other, but inseparably interrelated. The gift of the Spirit is the freeing of finite freedom from the power of sin, as the selfishness which ends in death, into the trinitarian power of self-surrendering love.¹⁷

In the Spirit, the believer is freed from his private, egotistical self and drawn into a new, personal, "ecclesial" existence.¹⁸ Thus, for Balthasar, the Church is the concrete place where the individual is called upon to participate in the cross of Christ as death to one's self and life for the others. In the lives of the saints, both those great figures of Church history and those whose self-sacrifice remains hidden to the eyes of most of the world, one can see the freedom and fruitfulness which arises when the believer is open and disponsible to the Spirit. For Balthasar, creativity and imagination go hand in hand with obedience to the Spirit because the Spirit is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think". (*Eph 3, 20*)¹⁹ In order to live most freely and creatively, the Christian must live in constant readiness to receive the Spirit as the concrete form of his life in Christ. What happens in Baptism must not fall into the past.

It must remain on-going event. The more that the Christian opens himself up to receive the Spirit, the more he will enter into his own true freedom.

Der Mensch wird dann zu seiner eigenen freisten Freiheit erlöst, wenn er im Wind des absoluten Geistes geweht wird und mit weht; was darin Passivität zu liegen scheint, ist die entscheidende Öffnung zur umgreifenden absoluten Zukunft: zum Schöpferischen in letzter Instanz... 20

The more the Christian lives in the true freedom of the Spirit, the more he will find himself ready to sacrifice himself for others. In this way, he is enabled to participate in a unique way in the fruitful, reconciling work of the Spirit. The one who drinks from the Spirit of Christ will himself become a source of water welling up to eternal life.

All of this means that for Balthasar, the new freedom to which God calls us, the "pneumatic" existence of the Christian, is something which expresses itself communally and concretely in the Church. Freedom is not individualism. Personal existence is not private existence. For Balthasar, the Church is absolutely necessary precisely as *communio* in this saving process of de-privatization. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." (*Luke 9, 23f*) How does the Church make such discipleship possible?

Authentic Christian spirituality in its ecclesial dimension will always have two interrelated aspects: (1) the "objective" structures or forms of mediation of the Christ event: sacraments, scripture, tradition and office and (2) the "subjective" realization of the divine life which is mediated objectively in the Church: as the living union-in-love of the believers in Christ.²¹ Balthasar also speaks of three aspects of the reality of the ecclesial medium of the Church in which the Spirit leads the world into the truth of Christ. The Church is *medium of being* in the sacraments; *medium of knowledge* in its preaching of the gospel, theological activity, dogmatic formulations, and in the experience of prayer and contemplation; and *medium of love* in the unity of the brethren.²²

As we saw in the last chapter, the objective, institutional aspect of the Church can never be isolated from the subjective, personal reality of the Church as loving union--until the second coming of Christ.²³ Keeping this in mind, we shall first consider the implications of the structural reality of the Church for Christian spirituality and then the subjective reality of the Church as communion in love.

II. THE OBJECTIVE STRUCTURES OF THE CHURCH AS MEDIATION AND NORM OF LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

A. DISCIPLESHIP AND THE SACRAMENTS

In the previous section we asked how the Church makes discipleship possible. How is it possible for the believer to "take up his cross" concretely and to follow the Lord? Balthasar points to the fundamental paradox of Jesus' summons: how is it at all possible for the believer to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in his absolutely total, utterly unique, obedient surrender to the will of the Father? How can sinful man imitate the inimitable gestalt of sinless love in Jesus Christ? Is one forced to abandon the notion of imitation (*Nachahmung*) and speak at most of a following after (*Nachfolge*)?

Balthasar insists that the gift of the Holy Spirit actually draws us into the unique existence of Christ and so makes discipleship--apparently impossible at first glance, possible. This transcendence of human possibilities cannot occur by virtue of the individual believer's own powers, but solely by virtue of his surrender to the action of the Spirit, who leads him into the inner reality of the Christ event. Only by the obedience of faith is such union with Christ in his mission-existence possible. For Balthasar the possibility of discipleship lies in the command of the Lord at the Last Supper: "Do this in memory of me". Before his passion and death, the Lord

draws the disciples into his saving death and resurrection. Thus for Balthasar, the eucharistic unity of the disciples with the Lord and the pouring out of the Spirit from the cross are the foundation of the possibility of discipleship in the Church. The Church as the Body-Bride of Christ, and so as the "place" where "impossible" discipleship is truly possible, is born out of the eucharistic sacrifice of the cross. Through the sacraments, primarily through Baptism and the Eucharist, we are led by the Spirit into real, ontic union with Christ as members of his mystical body.²⁴ For Balthasar, this means a real "change of position", an ontic transformation. "In Christ" is "where the Christian lives, in the same way that Christ lives "in" the Father."²⁵ For Balthasar, this isn't a temporal or a spatial positioning. Neither does it represent simply an ideal or model or the external acceptance of a mission or honor, as can be the case when, in civil society, someone is inaugurated "in office", or assumes a professional "standing". It is a totally new determination of the personal existence of the believer, in which the form of Christ's earthly existence becomes the unique form of the individual believer. This transposition "into" and transformation "in" Christ occurs primarily in Baptism and Eucharist.²⁶

Thus for Balthasar, it would seem that the ontic reality of the sacraments is the absolutely necessary condition for the possibility of discipleship: life in and with Christ. As such they must form a central part of any fully Christian

spirituality. Without the gift of God's divine life in Baptism and in the Eucharist, the union of the individual with Christ and the communion of believers in and with Christ would remain merely an ideal toward which we would strive but which we never could reach.

The ontic change which is brought about by faith-filled reception of the sacraments is not conceived of mechanically or statically. According to Balthasar, the ontic reality of the sacraments has both an indicative and an imperative dimension.²⁷ The command of Christ to celebrate the Eucharist includes the command to enter ever more deeply into what is celebrated. In the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Church is one with the Lord in his saving death and resurrection for the world and is called by her Lord to ever-greater surrender to and acknowledgment of this, her inner reality. Eucharist is not merely a reminiscence of Calvary but "constant participation" in the cross and resurrection of the Lord. It is a "dangerous remembering" insofar as the Church is challenged anew to enter into the sacrifice she celebrates.

Die Nachfolge Christi ist somit weit mehr als ein bloß moralisches Befolgen seiner Gebote und Räte, bloße Nachahmung seiner Taten und Tugenden. Es ist, hier und jetzt, ein Leben aus der Wahrheit seines Todes und seiner Auferstehung, seinshaft durch die Kraft seiner Gnade von Kreuz und Ostern, bewußtseinshaft durch den glaubenden Mitvollzug--soweit er dazu ruft und befähigt--seiner Wege durch die Welt und die Hölle zum Himmel. 28

This text shows that there are two important aspects to living in the reality of Christ's death and resurrection: the ontic dimension and the reflective, conscious dimension.

When speaking of the sacraments, and their importance in Christian life, Balthasar seems to stress the first dimension, a kind of objective, ontic determination of human existence as existence "in Christ" or "in the form of Christ". Through the sacraments, the Holy Spirit makes present the grace and work of Christ in all its incarnate, "bodily" reality.²⁹ Balthasar even calls the sacraments a "physical" form of mediation of God's self-revelation.³⁰ In this connection, it is interesting to note that for Balthasar, all extraordinary mystical experiences, especially the experiential participation in the various moments of the suffering, death or resurrection of the Lord, have their fundamental ground here in the sacraments as real participation in the humanity of the Lord.³¹

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Through the reception of the sacraments in the humble obedience of faith, the Christian has the assurance that the Spirit continues to lead him or her more deeply into the reality of the Paschal Mystery. This is an extremely important dimension of Christian life especially since the believer is forced to confront the discrepancy between the Lord's command to "follow!" and his or her own

reluctance and inability to follow. The sacraments are the effective expression of the priority of God's grace-filled action in the actualization of Christian discipleship. This is why Balthasar stresses the ontic nature of the transformation accomplished by the sacraments. The Christian knows that he cannot "imitate" Christ by virtue of his own power, but has the assurance that the Spirit will lead him into authentic discipleship: "You will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go". (Jo 21, 18)

Now, the revelation of the reality of God's love in the Paschal Mystery, and the transformation of the believer "into" the depths of this reality must also have a conscious, reflective or noetic dimension. We have frequently stressed that God's self-revelation is not mere "information" about God, but is self-surrendering communication of the inner-trinitarian love and freedom. It is clear that this does not happen without a reflective, noetic dimension. All personal communication contains such an element. Biblically, this is brought out in the designation of Jesus Christ as God's Word. According to Balthasar, it is through the scriptures, another form of the ecclesial mediation of God's self-revelation, that the Holy Spirit makes Christ present especially in his reality as God's WORD to the world. In Christ, the world is spoken to and called by God. This is a word which must be heard, reflected upon, understood and acted upon.³² Here the stress would be upon the second dimension

mentioned above, i.e., the reflective, conscious dimension. Balthasar speaks of the scripture as a "spiritual" form of mediation of God's revelation in comparison with the "bodily" form of mediation in the sacraments.³³

Recalling that life "in Christ" has both an indicative, constitutive moment and an imperative, mission-oriented moment, we might say that the sacramental dimension is ordered more to the former, while the scriptures play an important role in mediating the concrete will of God in each moment of the believer's life as the form-giver of his existence as a disciple. Certainly it is true that personal identity and consciousness of a mission cannot be separated in Jesus Christ according to Balthasar. Neither can they be isolated in the life of a Christian. We don't want to make too strong a distinction and say that the sacraments communicate an ontic share in the personal reality of Christ and that the scriptures mediate merely the will of God as it appears ever-new in its freedom and concrete historicity for each individual as the conscious form of his "mission". One can distinguish relative emphases, but may not isolate sacrament and scripture. For example, the Eucharist not only effects personal union between the believer and Christ, it is also a tangible, as Balthasar says, a "bodily" formulation of the fundamental divine call to enter obediently into the Paschal Mystery. The scriptures, on the other hand are not just words, information, and ethical directions for the disciple, but "spirit and life". (*Jo 6, 63*)³⁴ Liturgically this

is clear from the fact that no sacrament is celebrated without the Word of scripture. And, the scripture is primarily a mediating witness of the Eucharistic sacrifice of the cross of Christ, both in the historical process of formation and in its central, abiding reality.

It seems to me that Balthasar accents the importance of the scriptures precisely in the realm of the concrete formation of the life-in-mission of the disciple. Through the scriptures, the Spirit mediates the will of God in its sovereign and unpredictable freedom.³⁵ Through contemplation of the scriptures the believer comes not only to a deeper appreciation of what God has done for him in Jesus Christ, but also to a deeper understanding of the concrete response which is required of him: i.e., of God's concrete will for him. The disciple must listen constantly to God's word precisely because in the Spirit it is ever-personal, ever-new and utterly free. It may demand something of him today which it had not yet required yesterday. We shall return to this in the final chapter of this study.

It is only in constant listening to God's word that the believer can bear God's word, and so be fruitful with and in Christ for the salvation of the world. God's word is transformative and fruit-bearing.

Wer als Christ in der Kirche objektiv und sakramental im Wort lebt, muß notwendig auch das Wort hören: Eucharistie fordert Kontemplation. Existenz als Tabernakel fordert Existenz

als Hörer des Wortes. Bergung des Wortes in sich fordert Horchen auf das Wort über sich. 36

For Balthasar, the union of both these dimensions is real and preeminent in Mary. She is the obedient hearer and bearer of the Word.³⁷ In her we find the adequate posture before and response to God's Word: "let it be done to me according to thy word". Life in Christ or life in the Spirit mirrors in a way the annunciation to Mary. It means making God's word as living event in the scriptures the basis of one's life. It means living from the word in its divine power for the word as the expression of God's will.³⁸

For the Christian believer such a life from and for the word has both a communal and a personal dimension. In the common eucharistic liturgy of the Church, the community hears the word of God preached. It is a kind of commentary on the depths of the eucharistic sacrifice which it celebrates, and as such, an essential part of it. It prepares and exhorts the community to realize what it celebrates: in both senses of the word. The community remembers the saving act of God in Jesus Christ, and remembering, it is led into its saving reality. This communal hearing of the word is complemented by the personal contemplation of the word by the individual. In personal prayer, the individual believer is called to an attitude of attentive obedience--readiness to hear what the Lord may wish to say to him in the Spirit through the words of the scripture.

Thus hearing the word, whether in the common eucharistic liturgy of the Church or in the personal contemplation of the individual believer is anything but passivistic quietism. Balthasar is essentially repeating the conviction of Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises* that the contemplation of the life of Christ in the scriptures is a medium in which the Spirit concretely calls the believer into discipleship and reveals God's will for him here and now.

In this sense, the scriptures, precisely as God's word to us, remain normative for the Church and for the individual believer. The scriptures are the word and authentic witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ.³⁹ Here Balthasar is clearly in the great patristic tradition, which as embodied in Origen, saw the dynamism of the scriptures in the Spirit, who is the creator of the meaning and power of the word, and the enabler of the "spiritual sense".⁴⁰ Scripture is the "place" where the believer can meet God's word in its power and glory with the greatest possible certainty.⁴¹ Scripture is not merely a written record of what God said or did in the past. It is a form and vehicle for the living word of God as the Spirit mediates it to each individual, ever-new in the concrete situations of life. God's word in the scriptures becomes God's personal address to man.⁴² Here is where Christian existence as true, living dialogue with God is possible and necessary.⁴³ Even the most intimate experience of God as he reveals his will to the believer cannot claim independence from

the scriptures, since scripture is the authoritative word of the Spirit.⁴⁴

...wenn endlich die göttliche Bezeugung Christi die Heilige Schrift ist, dann muß Lesung und Betrachtung der Schrift im Geiste und unter Führung der Kirche das sicherste Mittel sein, den konkreten Willen Gottes über meinem konkreten Leben und Schicksal in der gottgewollten Weise zu erkennen. ⁴⁵

Thus Christian experience of the Spirit, precisely as the former (*Gestalter*) of life in Christ, is something which is embedded in existential contemplation of the scriptures in the Church. The text we have just quoted stresses the ecclesial nature of the contemplation of scripture. The Spirit who authentically witnesses to the Son and makes the "inspired" scripture a form of the presence of the living Lord, normative for his Bride-Body the Church, is the same Spirit who fills and animates the Church, enabling her to give birth to the scriptures and to authoritatively recognize them as canonical.

It is namely to the Church as a whole, and to the individual believer as a member of the Church that the Spirit gives a "sensorium", a kind of supernatural aesthetical sense for the living interpretation of scripture by virtue of which the Church is able to perceive the word of God in its true form, proportion and convincing power.⁴⁶ The believer has a new "eye" for scripture which is capable of perceiving the convincing "rightness"

of God's revelation only when he submits himself to the direction and guidance of the Church. Practically this will mean both direction and guidance as manifested in the tradition of the Church's interpretation of scripture as well as a relationship with a spiritual director of some kind.

The tradition of the Church's interpretation of scripture is something living and dynamic. According to Balthasar, the Spirit, in his utter freedom, can throw his illuminating, interpreting light on different aspects of scripture according to the concrete situation and need of the Church and the individual believer.⁴⁷ This is precisely what gives rise to the living tradition of the Church, which Balthasar calls a normative kind of "self-regulation" through the Spirit of the living Christ.⁴⁸ Balthasar stresses the identity of the Spirit "over" the Church who inspired and continues to inspire the scriptures⁴⁹, and the Spirit "in" and so "possessed" by the Church, bestowed by the risen Lord as the divine power through which she can accomplish her mission to preach the word of God ever-new, living and more powerful than any two-edged sword and authoritatively to all nations.⁵⁰

Thus, the existential posture of living, obedient contemplation of scripture, alive and active in the on-going tradition of the Church as a whole, is an essential part of a fully Christian spirituality.

C. HIERARCHICAL OFFICE: AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

In the preceding considerations on the normative role of sacrament and scripture in a truly Christian spirituality, the role of hierarchical office has already been referred to indirectly. For example, we have seen Balthasar's stress on the catholic, ecclesial nature of sacrament, scripture and the interpretation of scripture. The Church as a whole is a reality not only "in" but also "before" each individual believer. If the Church is to be the normative mediation of the Christ event in history and the concrete place where the individual is able to respond in faith to God's revelation in Christ, then it must have the capacity to mediate and witness to the Christ event authoritatively.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Balthasar raises the question as to what or who this "Church as a whole" is: the Church as it really exists "already" and "before" its reality in the life of the individual believer. His answer, we recall, was that the Church does in some sense have a personal identity distinct from the individual persons who make it up. The Marian Church is, in its real center, the Body-Bride of Christ. This means that the Church has her unity and her personal identity in the person and mission of Christ. We have just seen how Balthasar understands the sacraments and the scriptures as the concrete forms in which this personal identity-in-mission is mediated. The function of hierarchical office is service or ministry to word and sacrament, insofar as they

effect and deepen the unity and identity of the Church in Christ.

Um dieser Mysterien willen gibt es in der Kirche ein Dienstamt: Dienst an den Dienenden, Vermittlung für die Vermittler. Mehr und betonter ist es nicht. 51

We have already seen that because in Jesus Christ person and mission are one, personal existence in the Church is also essentially existence-in-mission, participation in the one mission of reconciliation of the Lord. According to Balthasar, it is the Holy Spirit who leads the members of the Church into the full truth of their personal existence in Christ, and into the mission of Christ, by bestowing upon each of them a unique, uniquely personalizing charism.⁵² It is precisely this call outside of oneself, as a participation in the mission of Christ, that de-privatizes the believer and, in the specifically Christian sense, "personalizes" him. For the individual believer, the ability to fully accept this personal call and to actualize the particular charism, is possible only within the Church, within the perfect *Fiat* of Mary, where the Spirit apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Cor 12)

These individual gifts and missions come directly from God but are all directed toward the common upbuilding of the *communio* in the Spirit.⁵³ For Balthasar, Church authority and true Christian obedience must be understood fundamentally in terms

of the unity in love of the Church.⁵⁴ He suggests that the more one truly desires the unity of the Church, the readier one is to place oneself at the disposal of the entire Church. The hierarchical authority in the Church exists to serve the unity in love of the Church in the promotion and coordination of the various individual missions and charisms.

The unity of the Church is born out of the self-surrender of Christ and is concretely actualized in the de-privatization or expropriation of the individual into ecclesial existence for others. The unity that the Lord commands and makes possible involves a painful struggle. The Church is a community of sinners and therefore each member always lives, precisely because of the reality of sin, in an existential discrepancy between that which he "is" and that which he is "yet to become". This is where, for Balthasar, the hierarchy plays an essential role. The individual believer always lives in the danger of the illusion that he is doing God's will, when in fact, he is only following his own private desires or tendencies. A mediating "instance" is therefore needed, to help the individual and the community as a whole to recognize and to fully actualize the particular charisms and missions received in the Spirit of the Risen Lord. For Balthasar, this authority is not some kind of heteronomous force or power over the individual. This cannot be so, because the power of authoritative office in the Church comes directly from Christ, as a power to serve, in the command and in the bestowal of authority to celebrate the

Eucharist, to forgive sins, to bind and loose, and to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. Authority grounded and exercised in Christ cannot be merely an external, heteronomous force for someone who lives "in Christ".⁵⁵ Balthasar stresses how much the hierarchical structure and the individual office-holder must be "pure medium".⁵⁶ The mission of the office holder is not to point to himself or to the structures of the Church, but to point to the living Norm above all, to the Spirit of the Risen Lord, as he is concretely present in word and sacrament. But the office-holder is also called in a special way to re-present this Norm not only through the authoritative exercise of his office, but by making the exercise of his office credible in his own personal existence.⁵⁷

Moreover, authentic exercise of ecclesial authority is not merely heteronomous because it is fundamentally based on the "Yes" which each individual says in his Baptism to the whole of God's will, and by virtue of which he becomes and remains a member of Christ's Body. Thus the duty of the one in a position of authority in the Church is to lead believers, especially where they are imperfect and still sinful, deeper and deeper into the "Yes" of their Baptism, into the fullness of their particular charism, and so, into the truth of their unique personhood in Christ.⁵⁸

Die Kirche nimmt den Gläubigen bei seiner Lebensentscheidung für Christus beim Wort: dieses Wort ist im lebendigen Glauben, Hoffen, Lieben, also im einwohnenden Heiligen Geist gesprochen... Sie bindet den Glaubenden, der als Mensch der Erde

die Neigung hätte, dem Boden entlang zu kriechen, am Spalier ihrer objektiven Ordnung empor, woran er sich seiner Bestimmung gemäß entfalten und Früchte tragen kann. 59

It is from this perspective that one can best see why for Balthasar, concrete ecclesial obedience is an essential characteristic of Christian spirituality.⁶⁰ Since it is precisely within the community of the Church that the individual receives the unique mission which makes him a person before God, the only appropriate response for one who wishes to live, to actualize himself in the Paschal Mystery and so enter into the unique participation in God's own infinite freedom--for which God created him in the first place--is the obedient, grateful acceptance of God's saving, personalizing will.⁶¹ For Balthasar, this occurs concretely in the hierarchical Church. Authority should be something like a recognition and affirmation of the particular uniqueness of the individual and his calling from God. Balthasar points to Francis of Assisi, who laid his new rule at the feet of the Pope, and to Ignatius of Loyola, who placed the Society of Jesus under the Pope as its highest superior.⁶²

According to Paul, the believer is baptized into the death of Christ, and in this sense, says Balthasar, must recognize the supreme "rule" of the earthly existence of Christ--his obedience to the Father unto death--as the norm of his own life. True Christian obedience in the Church is, therefore, a participation in the posture of Christ himself before the Father.⁶³ The believer

is called to enter ever more deeply into Christ's own redeeming mission-obedience, precisely in his obedience to the hierarchical authority of the Church, which exists to remind and direct believers of the obedience in love which they owe the brethren.⁶⁴

Thus, it is clear that for Balthasar, the hierarchical authority in the Church is not merely a sociological reality. It does not come from the Church community itself. It is not merely a necessary presupposition for harmonious and efficient cooperation. It is instituted "from above" as the divinely constituted medium in which the Church and the individual believer are enabled to actualize the obedience of Christ.⁶⁵ It is the mission and responsibility of those exercising authority in the Church to help each believer do just that.⁶⁶ The sign that authority and obedience are exercised in a Christian fashion will be the reconciliation and unity of the community.

Thus for Balthasar, Church authority and Christian obedience are Christological realities and the result of grace.

Dieses "Von-Oben" ist christologische Gnade, die den Christen erlaubt, sowohl als Einzelne wie als Gemeinschaft dem Gehorsam Christi dem Vater gegenüber, vermittelt durch den zur Regel objektivierten Heiligen Geist, dank Gottes Raumgewähren nachzufolgen. ⁶⁷

Authority and obedience are not opposed to life and freedom, but are the very means by which the

believer is led into the fullness, the "catholicity" of freedom before God: the loving obedience unto death of the Incarnate Son in his mission existence.⁶⁸ It is precisely this freedom and life with which the Lord wishes to inform the Church in its mission. For Balthasar, the Christological unity between freedom and obedience, between personal identity and mission, is particularly visible in the obedience of religious life. This, he says, is not simply one form of obedience among many, but the expression of the true reality of all ecclesial obedience as loving disponability.⁶⁹

The text cited above makes it clear that the obedience of the Church and of each Christian to the Father is not only made possible through and in Christ's own obedience, but that this grace is mediated concretely through "the Holy Spirit as an objective rule". The concrete model for the relationship between authority and obedience in the Church is the relationship between the Incarnate Son and the Father in the Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit mediated the will of the Father to the Son as a kind of objective rule, so too in the Church, the Spirit mediates the will of the Father to the community and to each member of the community in the objective norms of the Church's structure: scripture, sacrament and authoritative, hierarchical office.⁷⁰ *Sentire Spiritus Sancti* or *Sentire cum Spiritu Sancto* is concrete only as *Sentire cum Ecclesia*, which becomes *Sentire Ecclesiae*.⁷¹ To think with the Holy Spirit means to think with the Church, which means to allow the discernment of the Church as a whole to take concrete form in one's own conscious decision. Balthasar suggests how difficult this can be at times: the Christian can be called upon to enter into the experience of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Christian

may be required to surrender his own "better insights" in a particular case, and so follow the Lord in his blind obedience to the Father.⁷²

Of course, Christ's utter obedience was the expression of the unbounded nature of his love for the Father. In the Church, authority and obedience must likewise be expressions of the divine love which appears in and forms the life-in-mission of Jesus Christ. Otherwise it is not inspired by the Spirit. The Christian exercise of authority and the posture of concrete ecclesial obedience will only be authentic and credible as passion with Jesus for the coming Kingdom of God and so, as passion for the person and mission of Jesus Christ himself, in whom God's Kingdom has begun.⁷³ This means not only burning zeal for God's Kingdom, but also the willingness to suffer in the surrendering act of obedience.

Balthasar emphasizes that no office-holder can take it upon himself to play God the Father at Gethsemane.⁷⁴ Furthermore, he admits that every Christian has the right to contest a use of authority which according to his conscience seems to go against the norm of the Gospel.⁷⁵ Still, it is extremely hard to see when such protest is appropriate. Balthasar often leaves one with the impression that such protest is an extremely theoretical possibility. We shall return to this in the concluding critical reflections.

Thus, we have seen how for Balthasar, concrete ecclesial obedience, especially as it is demanded

by the "norms" of life in the Christian community: scripture, sacrament and authoritative hierarchical office, is an essential dimension of a truly Christian spirituality. All particular "spiritualities" in the Church have this Christological obedience in common, and such obedience which "leaves everything" and permits the believer to place himself totally at the disposal of the Father's will is exercised concretely in the Church.

Und es kann kein Zweifel bestehen, daß die bewegte Einheit aller menschlichen Spiritualitäten in Christus den Namen Liebesgehorsam (der zum Auftrags-, Wirk- und Leidensgehorsam wird) tragen muß. In diesem christologischen Zentrum kommunizieren alle möglichen christlichen Spiritualitäten und sind deshalb mühelos durch die Mitte des Glaubens hindurch ineinander aufzulösen und überzuführen. Sie sind Ausformungen der einen Sendung Christi (die sein absoluter Liebesgehorsam ist) in die Vielfalt der von ihm verfügbaren Sendungsgnaden und Aufträge. 76

For Balthasar, both the exercise of authority and obedience can be a concrete way in which Christians are drawn into the reality of the cross. We have already alluded to the fact that because of the sinfulness of believers, the obedience required can involve the difficult struggle to overcome one's own "privateness" and selfishness. The process of de-privatization and expropriation into ecclesial, communal, and so, truly personal existence does mean the cross as death to sin and egoism. Balthasar points out that the office holder in the Church will also experience the demands of his vocation as participation

in the cross. This is so because the office holder is called upon to represent Christ, not merely in the authoritative exercise of an office, but precisely in his personal existence. For example, the priest is called upon in a special way, and so charged at his ordination, to imitate what he celebrates at the Eucharist. And yet, the office holder is and remains a sinner. The integrity between office and existence is something which he can never perfectly attain. He must always experience this discrepancy, and this is for Balthasar, precisely an experience of the cross.⁷⁷ The greatest symbol for this tension is Peter. Of all people, it is Peter, who had denied the Lord three times, who is given the charge to strengthen the brethren! And as if to emphasize the impossible discrepancy between Peter and his office, the Lord indicates that Peter will in fact be led, where of his own accord he would not go. Thus for Balthasar, the institutional reality of the Church between hierarchical authority and obedience is the manifestation of the Church's participation in the cross.⁷⁸

III. CHURCH AS *COMMUNIO*: LOVE IS THE FINAL NORM

The grace of Christ objectively mediated in the Church through scripture, sacrament and authoritative, hierarchical office is subjectively realized in the life of faith as the communion of love. We have seen again and again how Balthasar stresses

the fact that God's self-revelation is not mere information or teaching, but self-communication, participation in the infinite love and freedom of the Trinity.⁷⁹ Mediation is always directed toward unification born of the reconciliation established in Christ. The objective re-presentation of God's self-surrendering love in the structures of the Church exists for the subjective realization of this reconciling love in the life of the Church and in the life of each believer. It is the love of God, poured out into the Church, concretely visible in the loving union of the brethren, that is the final norm for the authenticity of a truly Christian spirituality. The Spirit who is vertically poured out upon the Church from above pushes out ever further horizontally, accomplishing his mission of the glorification of the Son in the fruitful love of the Church.⁸⁰

Endlich wird klar, daß das kirchliche Leben, vor allem die gegenseitige Liebe der Christen, keineswegs nur äußerlich ein Gott preisendes Tun ist, sondern innerlichen Bezug zur wesentlichen Herrlichkeit Gottes besitzt. 81

Love is the last, and the only credible word for the believer and for the world into which he is sent. Here is where the real meaning of ecclesial obedience for Balthasar becomes fully clear. All authentic forms of ecclesial authority and obedience are directed toward the upbuilding of the community in love. Christian obedience is ultimately the readiness out of love to be led

into the form of Christ's own self-surrender "for the brethren".⁸² The de-privatization begun definitively in Baptism is carried on by the Spirit in the free disposition of charism and missions within the Church. Through this existence in mission, which involves a particular "state of life" (*Stand*) in the Church, and through the obedience to the "rule" of the ever-greater love revealed in the cross of Christ as it is concretely required in this life, the believer is given a new personal and essentially social identity.⁸³

Kraft dieses Standes ist er zur Gemeinschaft hin enteignet; er kann, da er nunmehr in der Form Christi lebt, keinen andern Begriff von Persönlichkeit mehr haben als den, der sich ausdrückt in Sendung, Dienst und Hingabe. 84

The authenticity of truly Christian spirituality shows itself precisely in the self-sacrificing love of the community. Here is where it becomes clear whether or not authority or obedience was exercised in the Spirit. Here is where it becomes clear whether or not a particular "gift" or "mission" truly was of the Spirit.

Already in 1954, in his commentary on Thomas' treatment of the special gifts of the Spirit, Balthasar stressed the essentially social aspect of all Christian mysticism. This is not just true of mystical gifts in the narrower sense of the term, but holds for the life of grace in general. The more personal and intimate the interior life of

the believer with God becomes "in the Spirit", the more clearly and personally he is called--indeed driven, as Jesus was,--to service in the community.⁸⁵

Thus, for Balthasar, it is the unity of the Church which is the sign of true Christian love. While the hierarchical structure of the Church and its authoritative office serve to re-present and build up this unity, the true union of the *Communio* is born out of the self-surrendering love of the brethren. Where there is no love, the Church becomes a contradiction: a lifeless skeleton, which can hardly re-present and communicate the real reconciliation between God and the world and our union in and with Christ.⁸⁶ The unity of the Church in Christ is an effective sacrament of God's reconciling love in the world when it is evident that the individual believers are ready and willing to place the life of the community before their own private opinions and desires: "do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others". This is having the "mind of Christ Jesus". This is the true gestalt of Christian communion in love. (*Phil 2, 3f*)

The unity of the Church is not simply a conflict-free harmony. It can exist only when the individual is prepared to persevere, to "hold out unto the end" (*Mk 13, 13*) despite the sinfulness which one unfortunately experiences in the Church: in others and in oneself. This is love which

recognizes in each human person the brother or sister "for whom Christ died" (1 Cor 8, 11) and because of this, is willing to sacrifice one's own freedom and insight so as not to be a stumbling block for the other or a hindrance to community.⁸⁷

Communion must be endured in love and loved through endurance! For Balthasar, Thérèse of Lisieux is the shining example of what true Christian love in community is, and of the suffering and self-sacrifice which it requires.⁸⁸

Ecclesial authority and obedience must serve to guard this unity in selfless love, so that the Church, by virtue of its own living example, can preach the good news of universal reconciliation to the world.⁸⁹ For it is precisely as a communion of love that the Church is sent into the world in the ministry of reconciliation, offering the world that unity and self-surrendering freedom which alone can fulfill it.⁹⁰ Moreover, authoritative office, when it is exercised in a truly Christian way, promotes and universalizes the love of the *Communio* beyond itself in the Church's pastoral engagement in the world. This can be seen in the great importance which Ignatius of Loyola attached to the "fourth vow", the special obedience to the Pope in the matter of mission.

The Christian community is called to mirror the love of the trinitarian communion, a love in which nothing is private, nothing selfishly "grasped", but all is self-surrendering love. In this sense, any truly Christian spirituality understands the essence and goal of the Church to be the essence

and goal of Christian life in all its forms:
building an apostolic community of love.

SUMMARY

In this short chapter, we have presented the constitutive ecclesiological elements of Christian spirituality. A spirituality which understands life as life "in Christ" or as life "in the Spirit" must be rooted and lived in the Church. The personal identity and mission of the Church is expressed objectively in its structures and subjectively in the love of the community. Each of these dimensions are essential aspects of Christian spirituality. The dogmatic considerations of Chapter Three on the Church and the Spirit have provided us with a justification of this claim.

To live in Christ, to live in the Spirit, is to live in the Church, for it is precisely here that the Risen Lord pours out his Spirit. The Spirit poured out on Pentecost, as the completion of the Paschal Mystery, is the birth of the Church. The mission of the Spirit is to universalize the Paschal Mystery in all of human history, precisely through the Church's ministry of reconciliation. Thus, for Balthasar, the birth of the Church in the Spirit is the goal and fulfillment of the incarnational movement of God, and in a way analogous to the humanity of Christ, is, as his Body-Bride, the universal sacrament of salvation for the

world.

In order for the Spirit to be able to accomplish this mission, in order for the Church to effectively be the sacrament of God's saving love, the Church must be more than a community of men and women striving to attain an ideal. The Church must already exist in some sense "before" the individual believer as the objective re-presentation and the adequate subjective realization of the Paschal Mystery. The Church is the "*apriori* Mother", the fruitful womb, in which the Holy Spirit continues the miracle of the Incarnation.⁹¹ It is here where the Holy Spirit is bestowed within the hearts of believers in a uniquely personalizing, socializing and missioning way. In his concrete mission and through the concrete charisms given by the Spirit, the believer is called out of his own privateness and led into true personhood as participation in a unique way, according to the "analogy of faith", in the one mission of Christ. A truly Christian spirituality understands the human person in Christ's Spirit as *anima ecclesiastica*.

We saw how concrete existence in the Church is determined by visible structures, which are to be nothing more than transparent forms of mediation. Further it became clear how these structures serve to help inform the individual Christian with the form of the loving obedience of Christ in his ministry of reconciliation, and so, through the communion of love, to realize and universalize the Paschal Mystery.

The growth to maturity as a Christian is deeper entrance into the reality of self-surrendering love in an ecclesial existence for others. This self-denial is the believer's concrete participation in the cross of Christ. Participation in the Mystery of Christ's cross is the origin and the goal of the Church--both in her personal identity and in her apostolic mission. The Church, in its "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5, 18), points not to itself, but to the Mystery of Christ. This leads us to the next chapter, in which we shall consider the Christological dimension of Christian spirituality.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

INTRODUCTION

Both in the dogmatic considerations of the relationship between the Spirit and the Church (Chapter Three) and in the resulting consequences for an understanding of the ecclesial dimension of authentic Christian spirituality (Chapter Four), we noted Balthasar's emphasis on the fact that the Church does not have an identity "of its own" apart from Christ. The Spirit of the Church is the Spirit of Christ. The "I" of the Church is the "I" of the mission-existence of Jesus Christ. Without simply identifying the Church and Christ, Balthasar nonetheless "reduces" or relates everything to the gestalt of Christ. We saw that the mystery of the Church's existence and identity is, for Balthasar, best understood in the patristic image of the Bride, the new Eve, born out of the side of the Crucified One, the second Adam. Born of the very inner substance of the Crucified Lord, and so "one body with him", the Church is nonetheless a true "other", called to be a coworker, a partner in the universal, saving mission of Christ.

It has been apparent all along that the scandal of the ecclesial particularity of Christian spirituality, which nonetheless makes the claim of universal significance, is ultimately grounded not in itself, but in Jesus Christ. The form of the Church, and, therefore, the form of authentic ecclesial spirituality can be adequately understood only from the perspective of the form or gestalt of Jesus

Christ. It is necessary, therefore, to deepen our reflection by turning our attention to the essentially Christological dimension of Christian spirituality. It might at first seem superfluous to stress the Christological characteristics of Christian spirituality, in the sense that this dimension would seem to be indicated already by the limiting adjective "Christian". However, the experience of the early Christian community in Corinth, and the experience of the Church throughout her history, show that it is not always clear just what the Christological dimension of authentic Christian spirituality is.

In the previous chapter, the relationship between the individual believer and the Church as a whole was dominant. Here we shall deepen our reflection by concentrating our attention on the relationship between the Church and the individual believer to Jesus Christ, who in the Spirit, is the heart and head of the Church. Returning to the dogmatic considerations of Chapter Two, we shall be able to see how Balthasar understands the specifically Christological character of life in the Spirit, and so, of Christian spirituality. It seems to me that the Christological dimension of Christian spirituality has three important aspects. First, it is rooted in the irrevocable, historically unsurpassable uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ. Secondly, Christological existence is primarily rooted in the cross. Thirdly, Christological existence is representative: salvific existence for others.

I. SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE UNIQUE PERSON OF JESUS

According to Balthasar, it is precisely the irrevocable, unsurpassable bond to the individual Jesus Christ that constitutes the great mystery of Christianity and its essential difference to all other "world religions". God reveals himself in his infinite glory in the finite gestalt of the humanity of Jesus. This gestalt, like everything in the finite world, must die, but it does not sink into formlessness. In the Resurrection, it rises to God where it remains the eternally definitive form of God's self-surrendering love, and so, the ultimate truth (*logos*) of all reality.¹ Christian faith confesses that God's Word (*Logos*) became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (*Jo* 1, 14) The word of life made manifest to men is scandalously concrete and earthly: "that which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands..." (*1 Jo* 1, 1; *compare* 4, 1-3)

The objective bond to the historical gestalt of Jesus Christ and to the "historical Christ" who meets us through and in the Church--and, according to the Gospel, in every fellow human being and worldly situation--is what constitutes for Balthasar the truly catholic principle of faith and spirituality.² Balthasar sees the "catholic" principle in contrast to what he calls "protestant interiority" and non-Christian forms of mysticism.³ In his opinion,

neither takes the concreteness and scandalous objectivity of God's self-revelation in history seriously. The real historicity of God's revelation in Jesus Christ in the concrete forms of ecclesial structures does not seem to be taken seriously by Protestantism, while most forms of non-Christian mysticism cannot take the finite world as a whole and the individual person in his finiteness seriously.

The Christ of faith who meets us here and now is so much the one who appears in the gestalt of the historical Jesus that Balthasar can speak of "the historical Christ". By using such an expression, Balthasar apparently wishes to stress both the fact that through the Spirit, Jesus truly does reveal and communicate himself in history and that all experience of God's Spirit is absolutely related to the eschatologically definitive gestalt of the humanity of Jesus Christ.

This objective bond requires a movement away from self, a surrender of self, and one's own "evidence" before the gestalt of Jesus Christ, which God sets before our eyes. It does not mean the denial of intimate, personal experience of God, but it radically and concretely places the focus on Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the objective bond to Jesus Christ means that one can no longer look for God apart from the world, from concrete, ecclesial structures, human persons and historical situations. Like the disciples at the beginning of *Acts*, we are asked, "Why do you stand looking up into heaven?"

The danger of "spiritualizing" Christian faith and spirituality, either as a tendency toward an exaggerated interiority or enthusiasm, or as the platonic or gnostic tendency to view the concrete, sensible world more as a prison and concealment of the Spirit rather than the very medium of its revelation and communication, has always been present.⁴ Against all such tendencies, one must hold fast to the eternal, unsurpassable significance of the Incarnation.

Die Menschwerdung ist das Eschaton und ist unüberholbar. Wer darüber hinausstrebt, für wen der Vater im Sohn noch nicht sichtbar genug ist, der hat nicht hinreichend bedacht, daß der Vater sich im Sohn geoffenbart hat, "dem Ausstrahl seiner Herrlichkeit und Ausbild seines Wesens", ... daß der Vater nach diesem Wort, das das Alpha und Omega ist, der Welt nichts weiter mitzuteilen hat, weder in dieser noch in der künftigen Weltzeit. 5

The structural form (*Gestalthaftigkeit*) of revelation is manifested first and foremost in the humanity of Jesus Christ, which is the definitive foundation for the *Gestalthaftigkeit* of the communication of the Spirit, and so of Christian spirituality as the existential posture of response to God's revelation. For Balthasar, this means that the formal structure of Christian spirituality is grounded in Christ himself.

The history of Christianity is the history of the Holy Spirit making God's Word present and active in every age, and the history of human beings responding to this Word. But, the utter freedom of

the Spirit in his mission and the freedom of each individual in responding to the Spirit is irrevocably grounded in Christ. The mission of the Spirit is to glorify the Son. This means that the Spirit has nothing else to communicate to and inform the human world with, but God's last and final Word.⁶ The human person, on the other hand, is objectively given the freedom and ability to respond to this Word nowhere else but in the Incarnate Son himself. It is here that God concretely shares his freedom with man.⁷

Although the history of Christianity manifests this divine freedom in unforeseeable diversity, both in the lives of individual believers and in larger traditions within the Church, this diversity finds its unifying center in the person of Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as a "spirituality of the Holy Spirit" as such, because the Spirit never speaks on his own authority, but glorifies the Son, by taking what is His, i.e., the Father's Word of love, and declaring it to the world.⁸ Balthasar repeats the Church's definitive "No" to Joachim of Fiore and his countless progeny in the history of the Church.⁹

Die christologische Grundlage aller Geistbewegung in der Kirche, an die Paulus auch die pentekostalisch bewegten Korinther zurückbindet (1 Kor 1), bleibt Kriterium der Echtheit und der Unterscheidung der Geister. 10

One might say that the authoritative interpretative

witness by the Spirit to the Son begins in the Resurrection. The risen humanity of Jesus Christ remains the valid principle and norm of his continued "exegesis" throughout history. Thus the Spirit, which informed the earthly life-in-mission of the Incarnate Son, in which the Son is raised from the dead, and which is poured out from the Father and the Son in his risen humanity into the Church and its concrete structures, is a Spirit formed in Christ (*christusförmig*), sent to inform believers with the gestalt of Christ.¹¹

II. CHRISTOLOGICAL EXISTENCE¹²

With this, we come to the central point. Life "in Christ" is not simply life that Christians live "in the manner of" Christ.¹³ It is far more than a jesuological imitation of the earthly existence of the Incarnate Son. Neither is it life "after" Christ, possible because of what he accomplished, but now detached from his person. The time of the Church as the time of the Spirit is not simply a subsequent period in history made possible by and chronologically following the earthly life of Christ. Life "in Christ", far more than a subsequent imitation of Jesus, is existential participation in the Christ event itself. Christian spirituality is a Christological reality because it means participation in the saving Paschal Mystery.¹⁴ To become a Christian means to be crucified with Christ in order to live with him.¹⁵ To put it in other words, we are not saved merely "because" of

the Paschal Mystery as something which objectively and externally happened, but in the personal actualization of the Paschal Mystery. The new life of the Spirit, the grace which the Father bestows upon us, has *christhafte Gestalt*.¹⁶ It assimilates the believer into Christ and makes him an *alter Christus*. The Spirit leads the believer into the definitive, eschatologically normative posture of Jesus himself before the Father whereby each individual finds the true form of personal existence which God freely chooses to offer him.¹⁷

A. THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS

This definitive, eschatologically normative posture or form for personal existence is revealed in Jesus' absolute obedience to the will of the Father as mediated by the Spirit. This loving obedience to the Father is the foundational act of his existence (*Grundakt der Existenz*). It is what enables him as a human being to be the pure, perfect expression of God: God's Word. It enables him as a human being to do that which is beyond the capacity of any human person--to bear the sins of the whole world in his suffering and death on the cross.¹⁸

The trinitarian love revealed on the cross is the single, universal form for Christian life since it is the only love which is able to reconcile the human world with God, and so lead the world into its own true fulfillment.¹⁹

Thus, for Balthasar, the Christological center of all the various spiritualities which reflect the freedom of the Spirit in bestowing different gifts to different people, as well as the concrete historical situations in which the Church finds herself, is the cross of the risen Lord. Previously we saw how Balthasar sees the unity of all spiritualities in the person of Christ. For Balthasar, the event of the cross reveals the true reality of Christ's personal existence. On the cross, God reveals his heart to the world in a fullness not visible during the earthly "ministry" of Jesus.²⁰

Now, the life of the Spirit in all its forms has as its center the Paschal Mystery in its unity: cross and resurrection. Nonetheless, the accent which Balthasar places on the cross is unmistakable. This corresponds to the emphasis which Balthasar gives to the "cut" (*Zäsur*) in the life of Jesus between his earthly ministry and the hour in face of which he lived this ministry. It is the approaching hour, his passion and death, which is the concentrating fullness of his life-in-mission, for it is just there that God will enter into the full depths of the sinful world in its hopeless alienation, in order to save it and draw it into the trinitarian love.²¹

Thus, for Balthasar, all ways lead to the cross if they are truly Christian spiritualities. Balthasar stresses this in a recent article on Christian spirituality correspondingly entitled.²² It is precisely the cross which remains the criterion of

the authenticity of any spirituality which claims to be truly Christian.

Dort, wo sich innerhalb des einen mystischen Leibes seine Glieder als verschiedene Funktionen des Ganzen, als einzelne Charismen und "Spiritualitäten" differenzieren, muß deshalb das Existential des Kreuzes, das wie der Blutkreislauf zum Gesamtorganismus gehört, jedes Organ gleichmäßig durchbluten. 23

This accent is already found of course in Paul's warnings to the Corinthians. There, Paul's problem was not that the Christians experiencing unusual gifts of "life in the Spirit" failed to understand these experiences as grounded in the person of Christ. The problem was a one-sided understanding of Christ, which so stressed the freedom and spontaneity of the new life of the resurrection, that the reality of the crucified humanity of the risen Lord was no longer taken seriously. The result was a one-sided spirituality which failed to recognize the reality of sin and the necessity of constant conversion as participation in the cross of Christ as death to sin. Life lived chronologically after the Paschal Mystery, but ontologically and existentially disconnected from it, is not life in the Spirit of Christ. Unlike the citizens of a country who are able to live in freedom because of a revolution which took place long ago, a revolution in which they no longer have to fight, the Christian is called to live in the freedom of the Spirit precisely by entering into the Paschal Mystery, and existentially

realizing it in his own life in the battle against sin and death.

No authentic Christian spirituality can "leave the cross behind", precisely because the Spirit poured out into the Church in the resurrection (on Pentecost) is the Spirit of the Crucified Lord. The new life which God bestows upon the world can only be realized as participation in his death for our sins. The call to die with Christ in order to live with Christ is concretely the call to repentance, the call to die to sin and selfishness in order to live in the freedom of Christ "for others".²⁴ This is not something which is accomplished once and for all. For Christians, the final, consummating resurrection is yet to come.²⁵ Thus, for Balthasar, cross and resurrection are not chronological phases of Christian existence. They are together the essential, irreducible "existentials" or parameters of life in the Spirit. In other words, it is precisely the crucified humanity as the "concentration" of Christ's entire life-in-mission, now glorified at the Father's right hand, which is the absolute form of divine love, and so the normative form for Christian life.

For Balthasar, the paradox of the eschatological existence of the Christian between the two comings of Christ is ultimately founded in the trinitarian mystery of the slaughtered Lamb on the throne. For the eternal Christ, death and resurrection are eternal "existentials".²⁶

The paradox of discipleship lies precisely in the

fact that the disciple can only "take up his cross" and follow the Lord because the cross of the Lord already lies "behind" him, accomplished once and for all.²⁷ The disciple is led on the way to the cross yet "ahead" of him, i.e., yet to be personally realized in his own existence, by virtue of the power of the crucified Lord, the Spirit breathed out from the cross. Thus the existence of the disciple is determined by the cross "behind" him, indicatively "once and for all", and by the cross "ahead" of him, imperatively "for me".

Der Christ kommt vom Kreuz Christi her (in der Taufe wurde er in dessen Tod begraben, Röm 6, 4), um als grundsätzlich Mitauferstandener (Eph 2, 6) nachfolgend auf das Kreuz zuzugehen. 28

Just as the Spirit shaped the life of Jesus, it is the same Spirit who is active in the configuration of the Church and of the individual believer, according to the crucified Lord in his entire destiny: to be crucified with Christ, buried with him, to rise and to ascend to heaven with him. This cannot be reduced to some sort of predictable system or progressive "ladder of perfection". In his utter freedom, the Spirit can allow different aspects of the Christ event to become particularly "visible" in the life of the Church and in the life of the individual believers.²⁹ Thus the great variety of spiritualities. Discipleship does not mean "following" the successive "phases" in the life of Jesus. It means following--

which means obedience--the Spirit of the whole Christ, who is the power of the risen Lord, who mediates the will of God in each new situation as the particular "way" in which the Church and the individual believer is to "deny itself" and so enter into and personally realize the saving death of Christ for the world.³⁰ So it was in the life of Christ; it cannot be otherwise in the life of Christians.

B. "MARIAN" SPIRITUALITY

Thus, Christian spirituality is essentially grounded in the cross because it is the work of the Spirit to make present and to realize the death which Christ died representatively (*stellvertretend*) once and for all, in the personal existence of each believer. The attitude characteristic of such a spirituality is the readiness to allow the Paschal Mystery to be actualized in my existence--in whatever way God wishes to accomplish it. This means the readiness to let Christ's death actively form my life: acceptance and recognition (*Einverstandensein*) of what the Lord has done.³¹ The initiative comes from God; the only adequate response on the part of man is loving agreement to, or acceptance of, God's will. Surrender to God as both love and obedience. This, for Balthasar, is the personal actualization of the Marian "Yes" which as such characterizes and constitutes the Church.³² The loving, obedient recognition and acceptance of what God has done for me in the death

and resurrection of Christ is both obedience to the Paschal Mystery as a once and for all "historical" act and obedience to the Paschal Mystery as present throughout all time in the mission of the Spirit. Referring to what we said above, obedience as *Einverstandensein* or *An-sich-Geschehen-Lassen* to the cross of Christ means obedience to the cross behind me and obedience to the cross before me. Accepting the death and resurrection of the Lord for me requires the living obedience to the unique way that God wishes to realize this saving event in my life through a concrete, personalizing participation in the saving mission of Christ within the Church. In the Marian Church, I am called to stand under the cross in the same loving obedience which places my entire existence at the disposal of the one who empties himself out in love for me.³³

In the figure of Mary, Balthasar sees the reality of Christian existence as union-in-all-difference in the saving obedient disponability of Christ before the Father. By virtue of his unique obedience, the Christian is empowered to place his existence at God's disposal and so to receive both his own personal fulfillment and to actualize the Marian, ecclesial mission to cooperate with Christ in the salvation of the world.³⁴ This is what Balthasar means when he characterizes all Christian spiritualities as "Marian".³⁵

In characterizing Christian spirituality as Marian, Balthasar is not denying or downplaying its essentially Christological reality and focus. Mary is not

a figure apart from or in "competition" with Christ. Rather, Balthasar sees the Marian "Yes" from beginning to end--from Nazareth to Golgotha--as a unique expression of the grace of the cross. Mary's "Yes" is empowered by Christ's obedient death on the cross and reaches its fullness as love "to the very end" (*Jo 13, 1*) under the cross. Why not call true Christian spirituality "Christological" or "Christ-centered"? For Balthasar, the Marian reality of the Church and of Christian spirituality draws attention to the union or "identity" in ever greater distance between the Church and her Head, between each Christian as *alter Christus* and Christ the one Lord.

Vielmehr weist das marianische "Ecce ancilla Domini" auf den Abstand zwischen Herr und Magd, der sich darin äußert, daß der Herr in allem befiehlt, die Magd in allem gehorcht. Dieser geschöpfliche und christliche Gehorsam kennzeichnet die ganze Existenz: er geht bis zum Tod, ja bis zum Tod am Kreuz, er verzichtet auf alle eigenen Einfälle und Einwände, um den ganzen Werkplan vom Herrn zu übernehmen und alle eigenen Kräfte, leibliche wie geistige, diesem Werkplan zur Verfügung zu stellen. 36

III. REPRESENTATIVE EXISTENCE

A. *PRO ME--PRO MULTIS*

We have seen so far that the Christological dimension of Christian spirituality refers to its center and foundation in the person of Jesus Christ, specifically

in the fundamental act of the existence of Christ, namely his absolute obedience to the Father's will as mediated by the Holy Spirit. Christ's whole existence, when considered from this perspective, achieves its highest concentration in his death on the cross, which is the reconciliation of the world to God. The cross-orientation of Christian spirituality is Christological and not jesuological. Christian existence is not an "imitation" of the various stages in the earthly life of Jesus, but participation in his existence-in-mission as God's irrevocable saving act in history. Thus, the Christological dimension of spirituality always implies its soteriological significance. Christian spirituality is the posture of existential response to what God has done in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as something which is, and is to be done for me. Faith, as the fundamental act of Christian existence, is the obedience, the readiness to let the Spirit draw my existence into the absolute disponability of Jesus before the Father. Christian faith is participation in the faith of Jesus before the Father, faith which is expressed as loving obedience. Thus, for Balthasar, the obedience of Jesus' existence, when actualized in the individual believer, becomes the personalizing, life-giving form of Christian existence.

The Christian is not, however, called to personal realization of the Paschal Mystery for himself alone. The personal actualization of what Jesus Christ representatively accomplished once and for all, is at the same time participation in the representative

character of Christ's own existence. By virtue of our inclusion in the Paschal Mystery, we are given a share in Christ's representative existence for others.

Dies impliziert nun wirklich, daß gleichzeitig festzuhalten ist: die absolute Soveränität Gottes, der in Jesus Christus allein seinen neuen und ewigen Bund mit der Menschheit aufrichtet, *und* die Miteinholung des geschehenlassenden Jaworts der am Kreuz vertretenen Menschheit... Sofern Christi stellvertretendes Leiden nicht exklusiv, sondern inklusiv ist, kann seine einschließende Gebärde nur eine mit-leidenlassende sein. 37

B. COMMUNIO SANCTORUM

"Stellvertretung: Schlüsselwort christlichen Lebens"---in the title of this recent article of Balthasar, we come to the heart of the matter.³⁸ Representation is the key-word of Christian life. This is what we consider to be the third and for Balthasar, most important Christological aspect of Christian spirituality. It includes and goes beyond the two dimensions which we have already discussed. Not only does the Lord die "for me" and "for my sins", and so objectively enables me to die to sin and to live to God subjectively with him. By virtue of my inclusion in the representative existence of Christ, as a member of his body, I am drawn into a community of mystical union in dying (*mystische Sterbegemeinschaft*), where suffering and death receive a new meaning and

fruitfulness.³⁹

This inclusive opening up of the *pro nobis* of Christ's saving death and resurrection is expressed for Balthasar in the words of the Lord to James and John that they will indeed drink the cup which he drinks and be baptised with the same baptism he must undergo. (*Mark 10, 38ff*) This is not merely a prediction of on-coming persecution, but a revelation of the true nature of discipleship as participation in Christ's saving death for the world.⁴⁰

This is also expressed dramatically in the institution of the Eucharist. "This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant...": this is the sovereign act of God in Jesus Christ; "...poured out for you and for the forgiveness of sins...": this is the soteriological, representative significance of the Christ event and of eucharistic union with Christ; "...do this in memory of me": this is the determination of Christian existence as union with the Lord in his representative, eucharistic suffering for the sins of the world.⁴¹

These words are not simply directives for the community after Jesus's death. The representative mission of the Church is grounded in its eucharistic union with Christ. In the Eucharist, the Church-- and through the Church, the individual believer-- is drawn into Christ's sacrifice on the cross from the very beginning. United eucharistically with Jesus, the disciples are taken where of their

own power they could and would not go: to the cross.⁴² The Church can celebrate Eucharist and so come to be Church only because Christ has drawn the Church into his eucharistic death on the cross.⁴³

Thus on a deeper level, we see that the communal, ecclesial nature of Christian spirituality is founded Christologically in the representative existence of Christ understood in a "realistic" way.⁴⁴ For Balthasar, this "realism" is grounded in the Spirit⁴⁵ who made possible and formed the representative existence-in-mission of the Incarnate Son, and who, poured out into the Church, constitutes the opening of the unique existence of Jesus Christ to the whole world as its true "place" or home.

This sheds new light on what we saw in the previous chapter about the personal existence in community which characterizes the Church. The specific nature of the "being-for-others" which constitutes the life of the Spirit in the Church is the saving, representative "being-for-others" of Christ. For Balthasar, this is the central mystery of the *communio sanctorum*.⁴⁶ As Christ told the Samaritan woman, the water which he gives makes the one who drinks a spring welling up to eternal life. (*Jo* 4, 14) Representation belongs to the essential vocation of each Christian.⁴⁷ Thus, existence "in Christ" becomes existence "with" Christ in which the believer, in the irreducible difference between Lord and servant, Head and body, is truly drawn into the personal sphere of Christ's saving work.⁴⁸ For Balthasar, this is the soteriological

consequence of the identity between person and mission in Christ. The inclusively representative death of Christ for all sinners makes possible and demands the death of the individual sinner to his own private, sinful self, so as to realize one's new, true self as personal existence for others.⁴⁹ This relational, representative understanding of the person as "for others" points back ultimately to the notion of person we met in Balthasar's considerations on the Trinity, a notion most strongly influenced by the trinitarian theology of Richard of St. Victor.

The determination of personal existence in Christ as existence with him for others means that the realm of being of a person (in the theological sense of the term) coincides with the realm of his action in the community.⁵⁰ Concretely, this means that the more the believer surrenders himself to the true source of life in the Spirit, the more he himself becomes a source of life for others. The realm of effective personal activity is infinitely enlarged for the believer. It is no less than the realm of the personal mission of Christ himself.⁵¹ Thus Balthasar stresses the absolute importance of the contemplative posture of obedient self-surrender in faith. Only so can the individual believer enter into and remain in the sphere of God's own saving activity. Only so can his "action" in the world be truly fruitful. For Balthasar, this is the new work proper to the Spirit, who in the distribution of gifts according to the analogy of faith, "shares" and actualizes

the fruitfulness of Christ in the lives of the believers.⁵²

Damit ist eines der Grundelemente katholischer Dogmatik aufgezeigt, auch wenn die Weise, wie sie wirksam wird, verborgen bleibt. Die Ausmaße der geistlichen Gütergemeinschaft und der in ihr möglichen Einflußnahme eines Gliedes auf die andern ist grundsätzlich unbeschränkt. Und dies im Raum wie in der Zeit. 53

Not only are we saved as a whole people--in community (and not individualistically)--but each individual within this community, precisely by virtue of his union with Christ, is enabled and called to work for the salvation of all.

C. INCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION

Representative existence means participation in the eucharistic existence of Christ. It demands that the believer surrender disposition and control over his own life to the Spirit. Both the gratuitous participation in the life of the Spirit and the concrete way this life is to be further "given away" in service are God's free decision.

Balthasar makes it clear that we are not to picture the individual believers as ciphers, used in a merely instrumental way to mediate the divine life which God gives the world in the Son through the Spirit. The believer is enabled in Christ to make

his own uniquely personal contribution to the appearance of the Kingdom.

...daß vielmehr auch das, was die Einzelnen selbst aufgrund dieser Teilnahme an der verschenkten Liebe Christi leisten, mit in den Austausch eingeht: damit vollendet sich aufgrund des Für-seins Christi das Für-einander-Sein und -leisten-Können seiner Glieder. 54

In sharp contrast to what Balthasar considers the Protestant understanding of justification as the exclusive work of Christ, an understanding of Christ's representative existence as inclusive leads to a correct understanding of the unique, incomparable, integral saving work of Christ and the real share that the individual believer has, as a gift of grace, in Christ's saving work.⁵⁵ It is not as if God divided up the work to be done and gave part to his Son and part to Christians in the Spirit afterward. The entire world is reconciled to God in the integral, once and for all work of Christ. And yet, each individual Christian, drawn into the personal existence, and so, saving work of Christ, receives a unique, personal share in his mission. How this can be is an impenetrable mystery. For Balthasar, it is grounded in the Trinity.

The cooperation of the Christian with Christ in the work of redemption (*Mitwirkung, Miterlösung*) is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming the believer in grace into the image and form of Christ.⁵⁶ Both the reality of this

participation and its absolutely gratuitous character are for Balthasar especially well expressed in the writings of Elizabeth of Dijon, whose entire "mission" and spirituality were built on the insight and conviction that the believer is predestined by God the Father in the glory of his gratuitous love to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he contribute to the redemption of all the brethren, and so glorify the Father in the Spirit.⁵⁷

The trinitarian dimension is essential. In the transforming, conforming work of the Spirit, the individual, created spirit is utterly penetrated by the Holy Spirit in such a way that for all the radicality of the union, the difference between God and the finite individual is never negated. The Spirit dwells in and informs the human spirit so intimately that in this "divine medium", the human spirit exists on an entirely different level and is capable of activity for which in and of itself, it hadn't even the rudimentary beginnings.⁵⁸ Like the fruit of the eternal trinitarian love between Father and Son, the fruit of the union between the individual believer and the Holy Spirit bears the traces of both, so that it is impossible to determine just what comes from God and what from the individual.⁵⁹

And yet, as we said, this intimate union never becomes simple identification of creature and Creator. The utter intimacy and the absolute difference are both grounded in the circumincession of the divine persons in the Trinity. Since for

Balthasar this divine circumincession is pre-eminently revealed and visible in the personal existence of Jesus Christ, we could express the relationship of the believer and the Holy Spirit Christologically: unconfused, undivided. Once the relationship between the redemptive work of Christ and the coredemptive work of the Christian is thus Christologically and pneumatologically defined, one needn't any longer understand grace and "works" as opposed.

Wer Gnade sagt, sagt schon Werk, wer Erlösung sagt, sagt schon Miterlösung. So liegt es im Begriff der Teilnahme und der Kommunion, die das Wesen der erlösenden Gnade ist... Welchen Sinn hätte sonst eine Gleichgestaltung mit dem Sohn? Würde Gott dem Menschen nicht das Kostbarste seiner Gnade verweigern, wenn er ihm die Kraft ihrer Wirksamkeit, die sie am Kreuz bewies, entzöge? Wie verblendet müssen die sein, die Gnade und Werke einander fremd gegenüberstellen, als sei nicht die Fruchtbarkeit der Gnade im Menschen das ganze christliche Werk! 60

D. FRUITFUL IN AND WITH THE LORD

God, having bestowed his own divine life in self-surrendering love upon the creature in its utter poverty, is not content to let the creature so gifted feel forever like a beggar, hopelessly trapped in the embarrassment of being treated like someone who he really isn't at all.⁶¹ According to Balthasar, this is precisely where grace reveals itself as grace. If it were only the one-sided sign of a king's favor to a poor beggar

then all the light would focus on the king and his goodness and only incidentally fall on the beggar, who apart from the king's generosity is a "nobody". On the contrary, God's grace comes to its true fullness in the individual by affecting him innerly, transforming and ennobling him, so that he truly does become what God's grace would make him. The divine King bestows a real share in his own royal prerogatives and functions upon the poor sinner, so that through this ennobling grace, he can fulfill his new "position" with the required dignity and naturalness, without being constantly embarrassed and inhibited by the thought of his miserable origins.⁶²

For Balthasar, this is exactly what St. Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians that we have been adopted as God's children and received the Spirit in our hearts which truly makes us heirs with Christ and enables us to cry out "Abba, Father". (*Gal* 4, 4-7) When God adopts us as his children in grace, then we are truly his children, and he doesn't wish us to feel less loved than his only begotten Son.⁶³ Through this Spirit, the believer is enabled to play a unique role in the salvation of the world, not merely in the name of Christ, but also because of his own "merits", which themselves are gifts of the Spirit.⁶⁴ And so, the believer gives glory to God for the glory he has bestowed upon us in Christ.⁶⁵ In Christ, the believer is not only a receiver, but also a giver. The paradox of the kenosis of the Son marks his existence: precisely insofar as he is poor and empty, so as to receive

the Spirit, the Christian is made rich for others. Filled with the Spirit, his life becomes a source of grace for others.⁶⁶ Balthasar expresses this beautifully by drawing on the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. The young boy hasn't any idea how it is that Jesus is able to feed thousands of people with five loaves of bread and a couple of fish. But in utter astonishment, he realizes that they are indeed his few loaves and fish that are being handed out for the nourishment of so many.⁶⁷ Fruitfulness--in unimaginable dimensions--is the work of the Spirit active in and through the self-surrendering poverty and love of the individual believer.

For Balthasar, the saving, representative significance of Christian existence is a consequence, continuation and fulfillment of the kenotic movement of the Incarnation. The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son through the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary continues in an analogous way in the lives of believers. The individual is like a womb or field, prepared and laid claim to by God to receive the seed of God's word. This divine seed is carried, not for the individual himself, but for God, whose seed it is, and to whom the fruit belongs. The mystery of Christian fruitfulness, like the mystery of the Son's Incarnation in Mary, is precisely the fact that the divine seed can mature only in the human life that carries it, and that it bears divine, saving fruit.

...aber mitten darin wird er tiefer mit schöpferischer Kraft begabt: solcher nämlich, die der Forderung göttliche Frucht auszutragen, gewachsen ist, ja geradezu mit einem göttlichen Fruchtbarkeitsprinzip, das das eingesäete Wort Gottes selbst ist: der Same überträgt auf den Schoß die ihm gemäße Form von Fruchtbarkeit. 68

The Christian knows that he can live and bear saving fruit only if he remains in Christ, the source of his fruitfulness. In the imagery of the Fourth Gospel, there can be no mistake about who is the vine and who the branch. But the Christian is called to bear fruit, fruit that lasts, fruit for the salvation of the world. The principle of fruitfulness is the risen humanity of Jesus Christ who is present in the hearts of believers through the Spirit.

Now, the humanity of Christ is no mere instrument used by the Son. Rather it is the saving expression and the effective communication of God's self-surrendering love. The Spirit carries on and completes the Incarnation by informing believers with the form of the saving reality of Christ's humanity. Transformed in Christ, the concrete suffering love of the *communio sanctorum* is not merely an external, additional witness to God's love as revealed in Christ, but this divine love itself as actually communicated and received present in the hearts of believers through the Spirit.⁶⁹ It is in the life of the community that the representative existence of Christ made present in the structures of the Church is truly actualized and effective for the salvation of the world.

If Balthasar stresses what he sees to be the Catholic truth of representation, he also makes it very clear that the saving work which the Christian can accomplish in and with Christ is radically a gift and essentially the obedient acceptance of the cross. True solidarity with Christ for the salvation of the world comes only from true *caritas*, and according to the New Testament, that means cross, Eucharist.⁷⁰

Hier ist nicht nur alles nah ans Kreuz Christi heran-, sondern in sein Inneres hineingerückt, wobei die Handelnden keinerlei Hybris bezichtigt werden können. Sie wissen genau, daß "alles Gnade" ist, das letzte Wort des sterbenden "Landpfarrers", dessen Leiden und Tod stellvertretend für seine Gemeinde war. 71

This is actualized in the sacramental life of the Church, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist.⁷² It is also actualized in ordinary human situations, in what, for example, have been called the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Above all, for Balthasar, it is real in prayer and suffering for and with others (*Für-bitte*, *Für-Leiden*).⁷³ We see it in the life and teaching of Paul, who understood his suffering with Christ as necessary and representative for the Church and for the world: "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church..." (*Col 1, 24*)⁷⁴

Balthasar takes this very literally. Christians are called to make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ. In the everyday life of the Christian, the call to Christian love often takes on the form of the concrete call to the cross: the ultimate form and expression of God's love. The humbling experience of the enormous discrepancy between that which a Christian is and should be by virtue of his Baptism and eucharistic union with Christ and how he actually lives can be a grace-filled experience of the cross. This is for Balthasar the deepest meaning of the sacrament of Penance. Balthasar also suggests how office holders in the Church are called by the Lord to participate in Peter's experience of the cross: the weak, sinful denier of the Lord, called upon to represent and mediate the faithful mercy and justice of God! But also those who suffer because of misunderstanding or injustice in the Church. How many prophets and reformers sent by God have suffered in the Church and yet endured in faith, hope and love! And what of the countless men and women who, motivated by the Gospel, suffer persecution because of their loving engagement for those who suffer injustice. To live out the vows of marriage in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, for better or for worse, is for many a faith-filled surrender to participation in Christ's cross. Caring for the terminally ill, being with those who suffer without knowing how one can help further, recognizing one's own weakness, selfishness and sin--these can all be concrete forms in which the Christian is drawn into the

suffering of the Lord.

Because the Christian knows of his union in the representative existence of Christ, he has the sure hope that his suffering can bear much fruit beyond himself, even in persons and situations of which he is not conscious. The effectiveness of such life-for-others, just where it bears fruit, cannot always be measured and observed, anymore than one could follow the seed of wild flowers blown in all directions over the fields by the wind.⁷⁵

God does not promise that we shall see the fruits of our labors and sufferings, any more than Christ could "see" the fruits of his mission. God promises only that if we do surrender our lives in love for the brethren--if we hold out in the communion until the end--then we will bear much fruit.

Die christlichen, genauer: katholischen Voraussetzungen sind also diese: Die Kirche Christi ist nicht bloß die Gemeinschaft der durch Christus Erlösten, sondern derer, die aus der Gnade der Erlösung am Kreuz ihr eigenes Leben machen dürfen. Sie dürfen und müssen einander lieben, wie Christus sie geliebt hat, und das heißt, sie dürfen und müssen ihr Leben für einander geben. 76

Christian spirituality, insofar as it manifests this central dimension of life in Christ as representative life for the salvation of the world, must be marked by the confidence of obedient

faith in God for whom "nothing is impossible". Otherwise, its ability to sustain and support a eucharistic life-for-others will be short-lived. The experience of apparent failure and uselessness are too frequent. Especially in this experience of the apparent uselessness of suffering, the disciple is called to live in the experience of the Lord who cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Und wenn es wahr ist, daß das Leid des Gekreuzigten auch das sich selbst unverständliche Weltleid in ein miterlösendes verwandeln kann, dann können die unbegreiflichsten, die grauenhaftesten Foltern, Kerker, Konzentrationslager und was es an Greueln mehr gibt, in eine große Nähe zum Kreuz rücken: zu seiner vollkommenen Nacht, in der nur noch ein unausdenkliches Warum geschrien werden kann. 77

Jesus understood his entire life and his death as existence "for the many", but at the same time experienced the utter hopelessness and meaninglessness of the alienation due to sin.⁷⁸ Exactly here, where his efforts seem useless and meaningless, the Christian is called to let the eucharistic form of Christ take possession of him. What he has received for nothing he must give away for nothing, even when it seems to be "for nothing"--to no avail.

"Vergeblich" kommt von vergeben, verschenken, und zwar so, daß man nichts Sichtbares damit ausrichtet und nichts dafür zurückbekommt. 79

Precisely in this kenotic, eucharistic existence, the Christian, even as Christ himself, is called to manifest in the world the fullness and glory of the kenotic, self-surrendering love of the Trinity. The representative "being-for-others" which constitutes the essentially Christological dimension of the Church as *communio sanctorum* is a reflection of the trinitarian love: God's "being-for-the-world".⁸⁰

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have seen what Balthasar considers to be the central Christological dimension of life in the Spirit. Significant are three aspects which are all related to each other, and which lead to a deeper understanding of the ecclesial dimension of Christian spirituality which we discussed in the previous chapter. First, Christian spirituality as such is not the attempt to imitate various aspects or periods of Jesus' life. God may well give a particular individual the personal grace to manifest a specific element of Jesus' personal existence or to share in specific experiences of the Lord. Fundamental to all particular charisms, however, is the call to participate in the saving event of Christ's death and resurrection. What is required of the Christian is not the imitation of various external aspects of Jesus' life, but participation in his inner posture before the

Father: self-surrendering obedience in love.

This means, secondly, that Christian spirituality is fundamentally characterized by the Marian response, "Let it be done to me according to thy word". Christian life in the Spirit is the on-going attempt to actualize the recognition and acceptance of the Lord's death "for me" which is celebrated at the very beginning of life in Christ in Baptism.⁸¹ As we already saw in the previous chapter, this means the recognition and acceptance of a specific "mission" as a participation in the saving mission of Christ. It means the placing of one's own life at the disposal of the Spirit, whose work it is in the Church to draw believers into the saving work of Christ, each in a concrete "state" and vocation.

This means, finally, that Christian spirituality is characterized by an understanding of life in the Spirit as representative existence for others. The Christological dimension of Christian spirituality is essentially soteriological. Through grace, we are drawn into God's saving act in the world in Jesus Christ, and given a share in his responsibility for the salvation of his "good creation".⁸² We are called to be coworkers with Christ, not merely by announcing what God has done in Christ long ago, but to allow God to actualize the mystery of salvation in our own personal lives. Thus the social nature of Christian faith, and the ecclesial dimension of Christian spirituality is something far deeper than a merely anthropological-sociological reality.

The anthropological truth that one cannot be a human person in isolation, but only in community, points to the deeper soteriological reality of the Church as *communio sanctorum*. In a real way, the salvation of each is entrusted to the others. No one may live for himself; each must live for the others. With patience and love, all must forbear one another, putting on love, "which binds everything together in perfect harmony" in the "one body" to which we are called. (compare Col 3, 14f) It is precisely the one who has "put on the mind of Christ" (Phil 2, 5f), one who allows the Spirit to make of him an *alter Christus*, who is a member of Christ's Body the Church in the fullest sense and can live in--and even endure community, where still imperfect and sinful.

It is in this sense that the Church as *communio* of those transformed into *alter Christus* is called to be a sacrament of the final reality of God: the trinitarian *communio* of love, opened and surrendered to the world in Jesus Christ, as the world's final fulfillment.

This leads us directly to the final chapter of this study in which we shall examine the trinitarian dimension of Christian spirituality.

CHAPTER SIX: THE TRINITARIAN DIMENSION OF
CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

INTRODUCTION

Christian existence as the life of the believer "in the Spirit" has manifested its essentially ecclesial nature and we saw further how Balthasar stresses the Christological-soteriological heart of true ecclesial existence. Through the Holy Spirit, the individual is led out of the private, selfish existence of sin (*Enteignung*) and into the life of the ecclesial community (*Übereignung*) where he receives his true, personal identity as a gratuitous, unique participation in the gestalt of Christ (*Aneignung*).¹ True personal existence is, in the Spirit, not existence "for me" or "being of my own", but existence "for others", being as self-surrender. Thus the individual believer comes to his or her own deepest reality as *anima ecclesiastica* precisely as *alter Christus*. Christian life is a process of growth in the Spirit, begun in Baptism, through surrender of self. The more the Christian enters into the reality of the cross and resurrection (the "existentials" of life in Christ), the more he or she comes into the reality of his or her own identity before God.

For Balthasar, the condition for the possibility for such human, personal existence in self-surrender is the reality of the personal, self-surrendering love of the immanent Trinity, revealed to the world in the kenosis of the Incarnation. Jesus' existence-in-mission as existence *pro multis* is the economic gestalt of the kenotic love of the immanent Trinity. The real foundation and heart

of Christian spirituality, therefore, in its ecclesial and Christological dimensions, is the Trinity. It is not time to turn our attention to the specifically trinitarian dimension of spirituality which claims to be truly Christian. We shall look back to Balthasar's consideration of the role and person of the Spirit in the Trinity (Chapter One), and see what the implications are for Christian spirituality.

The first thing that strikes us in Balthasar's writings, especially in relationship to the Trinity, is his dramatic, dynamic concept of God. It seems to me that three elements are especially important, and all three have implications for Christian spirituality.

First, Balthasar stresses the radical freedom and newness or fruitfulness of the trinitarian God of Christianity, precisely in reference to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals God to us precisely in his ever-greater mystery: "*der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes*".² He is the divine freedom in its ever-greater fullness, God in his ability to ever "exceed" himself in the infinite fullness of love. If Christian existence is life-in-mission, life in loving obedience to God's Word, then it must be grounded in constant prayer, since God's Word as mediated by the Spirit comes to us as ever-new, unpredictable and utterly free. Thus prayer as the foundation of life in the Spirit is grounded ultimately in the utter, ever-greater freedom of God.

Secondly, the trinitarian form of the divine love is self-surrender, kenosis. But self-surrender in love does not mean the loss or destruction of "self". The Holy Spirit, precisely as the ever-greater fruit of this self-surrendering love, is both the witness of the life and freedom of the divine kenosis, and the constant guarantee of its form: the divine love is eternally triune. None of the divine persons is "lost" in their mutual self-surrender. This is the condition for the possibility of the creation of the world of finite freedom, and more importantly, the condition for the possibility of the salvation of the world as communion in the divine life and freedom of God himself. This union does not mean the loss or destruction of the finitude of creation, nor of the unique, concrete personal reality of human beings, but the transformative fulfillment of finite creation in God himself: real union in difference.

This leads us directly to the third and final element: the world orientation of God and the trinitarian destiny of the world revealed in Jesus Christ.³

Although God does not need the world to be God, the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ makes it impossible for a Christian to conceive of God without the world.⁴ On the other hand, God reveals himself to be trinitarian communion-in-difference and so, the only real fulfillment of the world of finite freedom. In Jesus Christ, God's personal, saving action in history, the final truth of God and the final truth of the world are revealed. Apart from Jesus Christ, we could never experience God as trinitarian love. And, we can never abstract

from God's dramatic action in the world in the Incarnation, cross and resurrection of Christ, in order to arrive at some kind of deity apart from and above the world, content in itself. Consequently, Christian spirituality is always, and radically, world oriented, because the Spirit poured out from God is oriented to the world. It is at the same time trinitarian because the Spirit present in the world through the Paschal Mystery leads the world to its true fulfillment in the eternal love between the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.

I. THE EVER-GREATER GOD

The cross of Jesus Christ as the revelation of a love "greater than which one cannot conceive" is the heart of Balthasar's trinitarian theology. The Spirit is the "ever-greater love" between Father and Son, the witness, both objective and subjective, to the eternal, inexhaustible, freely self-outpouring fullness of love, which Christians confess to be God.

Significant is the fact that for Balthasar, the fullness of God's being, precisely as trinitarian love, is not a static, "already accomplished" state of superlative perfection. God is utter fullness of being, and as such not "underway" to himself or to perfect fullness--and yet, the fullness which he is, is of its very nature "ever-greater". Indeed, we saw that for Balthasar, God is Spirit both in

essence and in person, and it is precisely the person of the Holy Spirit that reveals the true nature of God's "essence": to be ever-greater love.⁵ God is infinite comparative: *Deus semper maior*.

Ewig heißt hier zugleich unendlich, was nicht durch einen zuoberst abschließenden Superlativ (wie "höchstes Gut"), sondern nur durch einen ins Je-Größere offenen Komparativ ausdrückbar ist. Daß Gott je-mehr ist, als was der Mensch, auch der in der ewigen Seligkeit weilende, fassen kann, ist wahr; aber er ist, obschon er sich selber vollkommen durchlichtet ist, auch für sich selber das Je-mehr, jener "Überschwang", der sich personal vor allem im Heiligen Geist darstellt... 6

Analogous to the love between a man and a woman, which in its utter intimacy brings forth the miracle of new life, so too, the love between the Father and Son, in its absolute intimacy, brings forth the Holy Spirit as the ever-greater "more" of their love--more than could ever be expected.⁷ The eternal love of the Father and Son can never "fade" into the past. Not only does it remain alive and new, in the person of the Holy Spirit, the divine love is its own "future".

This dynamic concept of God and the central role which the Holy Spirit plays in it, appears early on in Balthasar's writings. It remains, one might even say in consciously intensified form, in his most recent work *Theodramatik IV: Das Endspiel*. In response to criticism (he expressly mentions Karl Rahner) that he offers a gnostic concept of a changeable, suffering God, Balthasar seeks

to bring together two apparently contradictory notions of God which seem nonetheless required by the trinitarian relations: both God's eternal absolute Being and the utter dynamism of the trinitarian "event".⁸ For Balthasar, the union of these two notions is found in the nature of the divine love itself. In the Holy Spirit, as the ever-greater "excess" or "fruit" of the love between Father and Son, there is something like a living "history" and an open "future" of the divine love, even in the immanent Trinity. On the one hand, Balthasar makes it clear that the divine life which God is, is not a "becoming".⁹ He rejects speaking of a "changeableness" or of "changes" in God.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the divine life, precisely as self-surrendering trinitarian love, cannot be conceived of statically. It is eternal movement and event;¹¹ not a "becoming, but nonetheless always greater--the surprise of love".¹² The one responsible for the everlasting liveliness¹³ of the divine love is the Spirit.¹⁴

Although it is not always easy to understand just what Balthasar means, particularly since his thought here derives largely from very paradoxical statements and experiences of Adrienne von Speyr, it is certainly clear what he is striving for. He rejects any philosophy or theology which would understand God's being to be "in process": as if God were underway to a higher state of perfection, or as if he needed the world to "come to himself". And yet, he clearly rejects the classical, static notion of God, which using the non-biblical categories of Greek philosophy, tended to see God as unchangeable and apathetic.¹⁵

Of course, it is important to realize that in such philosophical traditions, change and suffering were signs of finitude and imperfection. Here is where Balthasar's approach to the Trinity calls for a revaluation in view of the cross. As H. Heinz correctly points out, whoever denies God's capacity to change, to act, and, in some sense to become, makes the cross of Jesus Christ completely unintelligible. Such a concept of God robs God's love of its unexpected, surprising "more", God's eternity of its future, and his "superlative" of its "comparative".¹⁶

Indeed, what we call history and future in the created world have as their condition and origin, the eternal "event" of the self-surrendering love between Father and Son in the Spirit. Ultimately then, history and future are grounded in the utter freedom of God to be ever-greater.

Das Werden der Welt gründet in dem Überwerden des innergöttlichen Geschehens. 17

The trinitarian theology of Balthasar, with its unique stress on the freedom and utterly unpredictable newness of the Spirit, has important consequences for Christian spirituality. If, as Balthasar has written, "spirituality" is nothing other than the existential way in which one tries to translate the confession of faith into daily life, such a dynamic doctrine of God will have particularly significant implications.

A. GOD'S FREEDOM AND THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

In our history, the free relationship between the world and God, God does not remain the unchangeable, immovable One, but the utterly free, uncontrollable One. God's will, as the concrete expression of his loving freedom, can never be reduced to a past fact, a plan or a prediction of a future already known. To be sure, there is a sense in which the Christian can and must confess God's eternal, "unchanging", irrevocable "plan" to reconcile the world with himself. We can and must confess the "fact" that this is accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can and must confess the coming union of the world with and in God, when God will be all in all. (*Eph 1*) Still, the concrete expression of God's eternal "plan", insofar as it constitutes the personal reality and destiny of each human person, is something radically present, utterly unique, personal and new. Christian spirituality, therefore, cannot be a general theory of perfection.¹⁸ It can be nothing less than the willingness to wait and listen for God to reveal himself, and obediently to carry out the particular mission which constitutes my participation in the Paschal Mystery, and so my true personal reality as an individual person before God.

As we saw in the last chapter, this particular mission is an analogous share in the one mission of Christ. To this extent, Christian spirituality in all its variety will have some basic characteristics grounded in the mission and the personal

posture of Christ before the Father. Just as the mediation of the Father's will through the Spirit as the final norm for Jesus' existence-in-mission demanded of him a posture of on-going attentiveness and obedient listening, so too, the ever-present, ever-new command of the Father is the last norm and criterion for what a Christian is and what he is to do. Balthasar stresses that the Christian--just like Christ--is addressed by the living God, who in his infinite freedom is greater than any abstract law or general rule.

Weil es aber Ruf des lebendigen Gottes ist, der als Person immer mehr ist als ein abstraktes Gesetz und eine allgemeingültige Regel, darum läßt sich *der je-jetzt ergehende Ruf* auch nur je-jetzt hören und aufgrund dieses Hörens befolgen.¹⁹

It is not simply that the "idea" or mission which God has for each individual person is different. This is true of course. We saw how Balthasar's trinitarian and Christological notion of person led to an analogous theological concept of person according to which the personal reality of each individual consists in the unique mission that he receives from God. In this sense, there are as many "spiritualities" as there are unique persons. But beyond this, Balthasar stresses the fact that the unique mission which each person "has" and "is" remains a living vocation. The vocation and mission of the Christian is not a past fact, but ever-living event, ultimately grounded in the eternal "now" of the event of the obedient mission

and procession of the Son. The posture of attentiveness and obedient listening is required. This posture is the essence of prayer for the Christian as one who is sent. It becomes a living dialogue between the individual and God, grounded in the eternal dialogue between the Father and the Son in the Spirit.²⁰

The truth and demands of God's love are not something that can be learned and comprehended once and for all and then passed on.²¹ Christian existence as vocation, as mission, remains a living meeting with the living God, whose "essence" it is to remain ever-greater "event".²²

For Balthasar, then, prayer is an essentially trinitarian reality for two reasons. First, Christian existence is mission existence. The Christian is called and sent by the Father to participate in, to actualize the mission of the Son in a unique way. Secondly, the Spirit who forms the mission-existence of the believer is ever-greater and utterly free in the concrete shaping of Christian life.

B. CONTEMPLATION AND SURRENDER TO GOD'S WILL

Prayer is the concrete meeting between divine freedom and human freedom.²³ It is a dialogue in which God's word has the lead.²⁴ This is evident in the life of Jesus. The on-going character of God's concrete call and the on-going character of

attentiveness to the Spirit in prayer is revealed in the trinitarian structure of Jesus' life-in-mission. There we see the perfect correspondence between the Spirit over Jesus, who in each moment, in each new situation or phase, reveals the Father's will--and the Spirit in Jesus, through whom he places himself in loving obedience totally at the Father's disposal. Luke's Gospel above all brings out the essential relation between prayer, intimacy with the Father, obedience and mission.

The same holds true for the Christian. The trinitarian structure of Christian existence as life-in-mission is most evident in prayer.²⁵ The Christian is one who, with the Son, is sent. As one who is sent, he has the responsibility to carry out the will of the one who sends. According to the will of the one who sends, the mission can take on new and unforeseen dimensions.²⁶ The Christian has no determined "program" to follow or actualize, except for the living word of the Father. And with the Incarnate Son, he cannot look for pre-prepared directions, but must live in each moment from every word which comes from the mouth of the living God. (*compare Math 4, 4; Deut 8, 3; Jo 5, 19; Jo 4, 34*) A truly Christian spirituality, therefore, is not characterized by a self-determined discipleship (which is often nothing more than private ideology) or by an ethical-ascetical imitation of the Lord's suffering, but by the active indifference, the total disponability of the Lord for the will of the Father. To live in Christ is to be led by the Spirit.²⁷ The disciple cannot predict or anticipate the Spirit any more than his Master did.

The disponability which is the heart and fruit of Christian prayer is not mere passivity. The indifference which characterizes Christian spirituality is not dis-interestedness, but active readiness to hear and to obey. It is beyond the oft drawn contrast between action and contemplation.²⁸ In the Trinity, as we saw, the Spirit is at once absolute receptivity insofar as he proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is at the same time the expression of the fullness of God's spontaneous freedom.²⁹ The life of the Christian "in the Spirit" manifests this two-fold character too. To the extent that the Christian lives in openness and receptiveness for the Spirit, he will be able to live and act in the spontaneity and freedom of the infinitely free Spirit at work within him.

In the Spirit, human freedom is liberated and fulfilled in the freedom of God himself. For the Christian, therefore, prayer is a deepening, a true liberation into new freedom. This new freedom, nourished and deepened by prayer, manifests the same structure of love and obedience, spontaneity and receptivity, which God reveals in the gestalt of the Incarnate Son, whose existence is formed by the Spirit in-over him. Christian freedom is the Spirit in and over us. In prayer, the Spirit not only mediates the concrete will of the Father to us, but as the inner gift of the Father, he invites and enables us to help him accomplish his will.

Mary is the archetype of the fruitfulness of this obedient receptivity. She receives God's word,

spiritually and corporally, and through the power of this word, says "Yes" to all that the Spirit in his divine freedom will shape and form in the earthly existence of the Word. For Balthasar, Mary's "*Fiat*" at the Annunciation rests over the whole of the Incarnation. Without knowing what will be asked of her, Mary surrenders control of her life to God and surrenders also the demand even to know "how" and "when". She is actively ready to do whatever God wishes of her and in this trusting openness, is capable of bearing unimaginable fruit.³⁰ For the Christian it can be no different. It is precisely in the obedient readiness to let all be done "according to thy will" that the Christian can enter into God's freedom, and into his liberating action in and for the world.

Die Formbarkeit durch den Geist (im weiblichen Fiat), die wesenhaft Bereitschaft und Hingabe ist und Verzicht auf selbstformende Vorwegnahme, ist die christlich einzig gültige und einzig fruchtbare Weise, wie der Mensch (zu seinen Lebzeiten und über sie hinaus) im Sinne Gottes "Geschichte machen" kann. 31

The trinitarian structure of the Annunciation scene is characteristic of Mary's whole life and becomes the form for Christian life in the Church. The Christian is called upon to enter into the on-going "Yes" of Mary, an attitude of surrender as the active readiness which places one's entire existence at God's disposal.

The necessary condition for the on-going "Yes"

of the Christian to the concrete will of God as revealed in each new moment and situation is the attentive listening of the believer. This is for Balthasar the heart of Christian prayer.

Contemplation is the constant spiritual effort to be open for God's word in its fullness and newness so that we can perceive in each new situation just what the Lord wishes of us.³² Such attentive listening based on the unconditional assent to the will of God is the essence of all prayer.³³ The Christian must listen to God's ever-personal, ever-new word if he is to obey the living God and not merely carry out his own will, or his own previous conception of God's will.³⁴ Balthasar emphasizes that contemplation is necessary precisely because of the nature of Christian life as active mission.

C. SELF-SURRENDER AND CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS

Thus, for Balthasar, the ground of all Christian action in the world is the obedient, receptive and unconditional readiness to allow God to use my existence to accomplish his will. Therefore, the more I can place my entire existence at his disposal, the more I live in his engagement for the world, the more fruitful my action will be. The real principle of Christian fruitfulness according to Balthasar is the readiness to surrender one's own plans and the desire to be used and spent for the salvation of the world, a desire that expresses itself as the personal offering of one's

existence to God.³⁵ This desire to surrender one's self to God, to live and suffer with him for the world, is the true motivation of prayer.³⁶

In der Preisgabe alles eigenen Planens an den unfasslichen Willen des Vaters, im Gehorsam mitten in der geistigen Nacht, im Geführtwerden "wohin du nicht willst", im Versinken des Weizenkorns in der Erde liegt das Prinzip einer neuen, weltlich unbegreiflichen, in keiner Erfolgsrechnung zu buchenden Fruchtbarkeit...hier ist christliche Fruchtbarkeit, angeschlossen an die Fruchtbarkeit des gekreuzigten Christus: "ohne mich könnt ihr nichts tun"... 37

Action and contemplation are inseparably intertwined in Christian existence as life "in the Spirit". A spirituality which sacrifices one dimension or the other is no longer truly Christian.³⁸ Nonetheless, for Balthasar, the priority is clearly placed on contemplation: i.e., on the loving, obedient surrender to the Father who sends the individual Christian "into" the passion and death of Christ for the salvation of the world. Without this surrender, without this union with Christ in his saving death and resurrection, there can be no truly salvific Christian "action".

D. PETITIONARY PRAYER AND TRINITARIAN FREEDOM

For Balthasar, the connection between self-surrender and fruitfulness, which is the "goal" of Christian prayer, shows clearly that such prayer is anything

but resignation, apathy or flight from the real problems of the world. The more the Christian lives "in" the one who said, "without me you can do nothing", the more he finds himself led by the Spirit to "ask anything of the Father" in the sure confidence that "he will give it to you in my name". (*Jo 16, 23*) The mystery of loving indifference has nothing to do with a quietistic resignation of finite freedom before infinite freedom. The mystery of the indifference which is the heart of Christian contemplation is a mystery of personal union in love, and so of an interpenetration or "exchange" of wills. Balthasar refers to the famous statement of Thérèse of Lisieux: "The good God will have to fulfill all my wishes in heaven, since on earth I have never done my own will."³⁹ He understands *Psalms 144, 19* in a similar vein: "He will do the will of those who fear him". Important is the fact that this interpenetration or exchange of wills doesn't first occur in heaven, but in the life of the Christian on earth. Already here, his life is life in Christ, even if only underway to fulfillment.

For Balthasar, therefore, intercessory or petitionary prayer is grounded in the fundamental posture of Christian contemplation, which has as its goal the union in loving obedience between the Christian and Christ. This is a real union-in-difference, in which the human will is not merely swallowed up in the divine. The more "receptive" the Christian is for the Spirit, the more "spontaneous" and "active" he can be.

Daß Gott die Bitte des Menschen erwartet, gehört zur Ehrfurcht Gottes vor der Freiheit und Verantwortung seiner geistigen Kreatur... 40

Christian life as a participation in the divine freedom means that the more the Christian surrenders himself to God in the Spirit, the more his heart attains the freedom of God; and one heart with God, in *concordia* as Anselm put it, he is as all-powerful in his will as God is in His.⁴¹

This mystery can only be seen in a trinitarian context, says Balthasar. Again, what is at issue is the utter dynamism of the living God.⁴² The "God of the philosophers" tends to become a mere concept of absoluteness, or at best, if "personal", unaddressable because of his eternal unchangeableness. For Balthasar, the "unchangeableness" of God can be united with his eternal, inner dynamism only in the Christian confession of the Trinity.⁴³

The mystery of the Trinity and the trinitarian foundation for petitionary prayer are revealed in the prayer of Jesus. Balthasar first notes that we see two apparently contradictory phenomena in Jesus. On the one hand his unlimited disponability before the Father, in which he does not do his own will, but the will of the one who sent him. On the other hand, Jesus is absolutely certain that the Father hears him. At the Last Supper, these two elements come together. As Jesus enters "the hour" of his obedience unto death, he nonetheless prays to the Father: "Father, I desire that those whom you

have given me may be with me where I am..." (*Jo 17, 24*)
 These two aspects are not contradictory, since the obedience of the Son unto death is the economic expression of his absolute freedom and eternal participation in the saving will of the entire Trinity.⁴⁴ But, for Balthasar, the really important fact is that in spite of Jesus' utter certainty as Son that the Father always hears him, he never stopped petitioning the Father. The Father remained alive and active in a dialogical relationship.

In der kreatürlichen Haltung des Sohnes wird sein trinitarisches Verhältnis transparent und verhindert das Erstarren der lebendigen Gebetshaltung aufgrund philosophischer Reflexion. 45

Christ remains the archetype for the Christian. In the all-encompassing attitude of self-surrendering obedience ("Thy will be done"), the Christian is invited into the realm of the Son's freedom before the Father, a freedom in which he has the "permission" to enter into the depths of God's will with his own petition, and there to receive things that one who is less prepared to enter the Son's posture of obedience could not receive.⁴⁶

This is what Balthasar understands as "prayer in the name of Jesus", prayer in the "obedient posture" of Jesus, prayer in the "Spirit of Jesus". In a sense, it is "always God who pleads to God", together with the individual believer.⁴⁷ In Jesus Christ, the petitioning believer participates in the trinitarian

circumincision of the freedom of the divine persons.⁴⁸

It is only in the mystery of the Trinity, then, that we can "understand" something of the mystery of the real influence that finite freedom can have on divine freedom. Otherwise, we are trapped in the "either-or" of a petrified "unchangeableness" of the Absolute, or of the "changeableness" of a god who then appears finite and mythological. In the first case, one could ask for nothing else but to be conformed to the divine will which "already" exists and will accomplish its end anyway. Prayer would have only the "psychological" effect to support the individual's surrender to this conformation: a kind of stoic technique. This, says Balthasar, does not do justice to the real freedom that the believer receives in Christ, and to the active partnership in the redemption of the world to which he is called. In the second case, finite and infinite freedom appear to be on the same plane, and prayer would seem to be the attempt to "persuade", convince or even "force" God to do something which he would otherwise not do. This contradicts both the absolute freedom and the absolute fidelity of God to his covenant in Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ Man cannot "force" God to do anything for his salvation; but then, because of God's fidelity, man does not need to force God!

Balthasar suggests that Christian petitionary prayer is grounded in the prayer of Jesus, and so in the Trinity itself.

Supplicatory prayer is a mysterious participation in the prayer of the Son to the Father in the Holy Spirit, where the Father permits himself to be as really and directly affected by the supplication as the Son fulfills the Father's will and because he fulfills this will eternally. 50

E. PRAYER AS PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S KENOSIS

Christian prayer, as the essential foundation of life in Christ as life-in-mission, mediated and concretely shaped by the Holy Spirit, reveals the basically trinitarian structure of Christian spirituality. The ever-greater God is utterly free in the way that the Spirit concretely bestows and actualizes participation in the on-going mission of Christ. Therefore, the Christian, precisely as one who is sent, and ever-being sent, must be a listener, a hearer of the word, in order to carry out this mission obediently.

The Holy Spirit is the personal medium in which the believer hears. He is the personal medium in which the believer meets God's Word, Jesus Christ, and is informed and transformed by this Word. The Spirit is not an abstract, impersonal medium, but a personal--interpersonal reality: concretely, the Spirit of the Crucified Lord poured into the Church, active in both the objective structures and "missions" and in the self-surrendering love of the *communio*. God's Word is alive and ever-new through the Spirit in the Church's sacraments, scriptures and loving union.⁵¹

Therefore, Christian prayer remains ecclesial. It has nothing to do with flight from community or from the world into which the Church is sent--either into a divine sphere "above" or into the private sphere "within". One cannot help but sense the reserve with which Balthasar observes Eastern forms of meditation and mysticism, and the increasing popularity which such "spiritualities" have in the West.⁵² Time and time again, he emphasizes that Christian contemplation is not a technique directed toward the production, or even toward the attainment of certain "spiritual" experiences or states.⁵³ There is no doubt for Balthasar, that inner sensible experiences can accompany prayer, but such experiences are drastically relativized.⁵⁴ Jesus never taught his disciples techniques and methods for inducing various inner states nor did he encourage them to strive after special "religious" experiences.⁵⁵ Prayer is essentially directed to mission. The disciples are told to pray quite simply "Thy will be done". Jesus does not promise the disciples religious experiences but a share in his saving passion and death. Here one also notes the reserve that Balthasar displays with regard to the "charismatic" movement in the Church.⁵⁶ The criterion for the authenticity of prayer is not "experience" but obedient love. The only valid "method" (*Meta-hodos*) of prayer is the response of obedient discipleship (*Nach-Gehen*), which means surrender of one's own plans and initiatives--together with all demand for "experience"--and the readiness to take up the cross and follow Jesus, who himself is the Way (*Hodos*).⁵⁷ In the end, life in the Spirit,

nourished by prayer, is life in the trinitarian obedient readiness (*Bereitschaft*) of the Son. The one who lives ready to be sent, will be sent.

Die Vollkommenheit des Menschen heißt einfach: offen sein für das Geheimnis, verfügbar für Gott, für seine Gnade, für immer neue Beschlagnehmung für den Auftrag; ich werde gesendet, wenn ich mich senden lasse. 58

For the Christian, prayer is a way, a way of entering ever more deeply into the on-going mission of the Son, which is loving kenosis: God's loving self-surrender in the world.

II. THE SELF-SURRENDERING GOD

Corresponding to the centrality of the ever-greater freedom of God in Balthasar's theology is its concrete form as self-surrendering love: kenosis. In the first chapter of this study, we saw how Balthasar locates God's freedom to be ever-new and ever-greater in the kenotic structure of the Trinity. Following theologians like S. Bulgakow, Balthasar considers the inner-trinitarian life as a kind of "eternal kenosis" in freedom and love which is the condition for the possibility for the creation of finite freedom, and so for the possibility of real history and future for the created world.

The confrontation between God and the world in freedom is dramatic, ever-new. Jesus Christ, God's Word, the expression of his divine will, is likewise ever-new and dramatically present in history through the Holy Spirit. But because God's will is his free self-surrender to the world in love, his Word is at once a call to finite freedom to conversion and saving fulfillment in God. In utterly unpredictable freedom, the Spirit mediates this Word, spoken "once and for all", to each human being in a unique way which constitutes true personhood before God. The only adequate posture for the Christian can be one of indifferent, attentive listening and the only adequate response is loving surrender which places one's self totally at God's disposal. The mystery of such obedience for the Christian is that precisely in this total surrender of self--the self which one might attempt to determine "autonomously" by one's own plans and initiative--one receives one's true self in Christ. The individual is drawn out of private existence and led into true personal existence as a new and unique participation in God's own freedom and love.

A. CHRISTIAN SELFLESSNESS AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

This brings us to the second aspect of the trinitarian dimension of Christian spirituality. The obedient self-surrender and the inalienable freedom and dignity of the individual person before God, which together characterize Christian life, are ultimately grounded in the trinitarian reality of God's

kenotic love. Self-surrender, both as the ecclesial "de-privatization" of the individual and his corresponding life for others in the community, and as the Christological obedience of the believer as participation in the cross, does not mean the negation, devaluation or destruction of the individual person, but rather the necessary condition for true personhood and freedom, as revealed in the Trinity.

This is evident in Balthasar's notion of person in the Trinity. We recall that Balthasar, taking up the insight of Richard of St. Victor, and following in the spirit of the Russian "kenotic" theologians, understands the persons of the Trinity as pure "relationality", different forms of "being-for-each-other". Personhood in the Trinity means self-sacrificing love. True selfhood consists in utter selflessness! Far from being restricted to the realms of trinitarian theology, this concept of person is for Balthasar the ultimately definitive norm for personal existence in the world. Created in God's image, man can only come to his true personhood in the selflessness of the trinitarian kenosis. ⁵⁹

Aber nochmals: wie die göttlichen Personen nur im Überstieg zu den Je-Andern sie selbst sind, so sind auch die geschaffenen Essenzen sie selbst nur im übersteigenden Verweis auf ihren Urgrund (aus dem auch das Sein im ganzen ausströmt) und auf ihre Bestimmung zu Hingabe (an den Je-Nächsten, somit konkret durch alles Einzelne hindurch auf das Sein im ganzen). ⁶⁰

The mystery of the Trinity is the identity of self-sacrificing love and self-receiving love.⁶¹ In the divine love of the Trinity, each of the persons lets the others "arise" (*Aufgehen*) by virtue of its own self-sacrifice (*Untergehen*).⁶² Balthasar understands this quite radically. "*Untergehen*" also means "to go under", "to perish". He speaks of the generation of the Son by the Father as the will to such a radical self-surrender, that one can speak of a kind of "death" or *Über-Tod* in God.⁶³ By this he means the utter self-sacrifice of the Father, who gives not only what he "has", but all that he is--the ultimate sacrifice of self which the Son and Holy Spirit also actualize in loving response. This "radical kenosis" or *Über-Tod* is a moment in the inner-trinitarian love which is at the same time the foundation for all that can be called a "good death" in the creation: from the self-forgetfulness of the love between two good friends, to the love which actually lays down its life for its friends.⁶⁴

Thus the emphasis on the cross which we noted in the preceding chapter has, for Balthasar, its ultimate (and only!) justification in the Trinity itself. Precisely as the economic revelation and communication of God's self-surrendering love to the world enslaved in selfishness and sin, the cross is a sign of eternal life and the only way to that life.

Thus the negative element of "self-denial" or

"self-sacrifice" in authentic Christian spirituality is ultimately founded upon something eminently positive: the love for the other, and the absolute value and dignity of the other as other. This is the essence of Christian humility and truly selfless service.⁶⁵

Und nur in dieser Preisgabe des Eigenen, die die *Trennung* ernst nimmt (der Andere soll ja Er und nicht Ich sein!), in diesem "unter"-gehen, damit der Andere in sich selber "auf"-geht, ereignet sich die absolute Liebe, in der die Wesenseinheit verbürgt ist, kann sich dann im Gottmenschlichen jenes Opfer ereignen, das *Communio* in Christus grundlegt, kann sich in aller Welt wahre Liebe samt ihrem Leiden als fruchtbar erweisen. 66

Just as the Holy Spirit is the living, personal fruit of such self-sacrificing love in the Trinity (the "proof" that God does not "perish" in his eternal kenosis, but is "ever-greater in divine love and life), so too, life "in the Spirit" as mutual self-sacrifice manifests itself in the growth of life and love in the community (the "fruits of the Holy Spirit"). Here is where one can attempt to discern whether self-denial or self-sacrifice is authentically Christian or not. The denial to which Christ calls us, which forms the heart of his mission-existence, and which forms the heart of the love of the Trinity itself, is neither an ascetical ideology of private "works" or "merits", nor a dehumanizing ideology of the supremacy of the collective and consequent emphasis on institutional power.⁶⁷

Christian self-denial is not asceticism for its own sake. As good and as necessary as various forms of self-discipline can be, whether hygienic, ethical or religious, one must remain alert lest they become more or less self-chosen goals, ascetical "achievements" still trapped in the self. A spirituality of the cross, grounded in the trinitarian self-surrendering love has nothing to do with de-personalization, whether as the dissolution of the individual person into the fullness of the Absolute, or as the devaluation of the individual person in the exercise of authority, or in the actualization of particular "values" or "programs" for the "common good". Christ's call to self-denial in the cross--and we see this in its full truth in the Trinity--is always a call to an individual person of infinite, irreplaceable value who comes to the fullness of personality and participation in God's life and freedom through self-surrender.⁶⁸ "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3, 17)

B. LOVE: UNITY IN DIFFERENCE

This brings us to the final implication which Balthasar's kenotic trinitarian theology has for spirituality. Communion in love is not uniformity but union-in-difference, both among human beings and between each human person and God. The union in the Spirit (as Person from persons) is one that preserves and perfects the human person precisely in

his finite individuality and "otherness".

Since we have already touched upon the union-in-difference which is the heart of ecclesial existence (Chapter Four), we wish now only to point out the importance in this connection of the self-denial and self-sacrifice we just spoke of. Balthasar points out that the union of love which constitutes the Church ("one heart and one soul") has always required a hard battle against egoisms and selfishness. If it is truly good that the other as other is there, then each person must be willing to sacrifice his own "rights" and desires for the others when necessary and in appropriate ways. The letters of Paul, no different than the Gospels, are full of the call to self-denial as the condition to the love which accepts and cherishes the other in his otherness. In the Church it means that one must be ready to surrender his own dearest plans when the all-encompassing love of the community is at stake.⁶⁹ Self-denial means making room for those who think differently, who have different needs and different talents. It forms the foundation of Christian love which, more than mere tolerance of the other, rejoices in the diversity which is the work of the Spirit.

We wish now to turn our attention to the union-in-difference between God and the individual person. Balthasar devotes considerable attention to this topic in his latest work, *Theodramatik IV: Das Endspiel*. It is God's eternal plan, even before the creation of the world, that all things in heaven and upon earth be united in Christ, and so

live before God, holy and blameless. (*Eph 1*) The real positivity of the finite world, precisely in its radical "otherness" before the infinite God, is grounded in the inner-trinitarian "otherness" between the Father and Son in the Spirit, and directed in grace toward participation in the trinitarian love as its true fulfillment.

Denn es besagt sowohl die Eintiefung des geschöpflichen Anders-als-Gott in das ungeschaffene Anders-in Gott wie darin das Verharren innerhalb jener grundlegenden Distanz, die allererst Liebe ermöglicht.⁷⁰

The mystery of this union, which does not destroy, but rather makes possible and preserves the free love of each of the divine persons, and so, the gestalt of the divine life as shared life, is the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit is the unifying "and" between Father and Son, so too he is the unifying "and" between God and the individual.⁷¹ The world, in its "tragic", negative distance or difference from God is drawn by the Holy Spirit into the positive distance or difference between the trinitarian persons, which is the condition for the possibility of true loving union and the eternal expression of the freedom of such union.⁷²

For Balthasar, this is something definitively new. In Jesus Christ, the inner "process" of the trinitarian love (*theologia*) opens itself to the world (*oikonomia*) and reveals the destiny of creation. Man is not doomed to remain the "other", forever trapped "before" and "apart" from God (*ein ewiges*

Gegenüber). In Christ, he is drawn into the divine "process" and given an inner share in God's own life. His own finite freedom is filled with the gift of God's own infinite freedom in such a way that God remains God, and the creature remains a creature.⁷³ How this can happen is an inconceivable mystery, precisely because it comes as a gift, utterly from above. That it can happen, is for Balthasar rooted in the mystery of the Trinity.⁷⁴ The individual person thus lives in the paradox of utter intimacy and distance (*Nähe und Abstand*) in the divine love.⁷⁵

In die Abgründe der göttlichen Liebe werden wir ohne Vermischung immer tiefer hineingeeint, weil in Gott selbst die drei Personen ohne Vermischung die höchste der Einungen feiern.⁷⁶

Because in the inner-trinitarian kenosis, each of the divine persons "makes room" in love for the freedom proper to the other persons, God is capable of entering into genuine union with the individual in such a way that his true freedom and uniqueness is respected and fulfilled.⁷⁷ Only a trinitarian God can guarantee each human person, who as a finite creature stands free and even in some sense "foreign" before God, that he can be one with God and that in this union, he will not lose his relative independence (*Selbständigkeit*).⁷⁸

Just as the clear differences between the divine persons appear in the relational unity of the Trinity, so too in the union into which God draws us: we shall recognize God in the mystery of his trinitarian

"being" and we shall recognize each other, each in the unique characteristics which form our "personality". Quoting Adrienne von Speyr, Balthasar even suggests that the unique personality of each human being will, having come to its fullness, be even more sharply defined than before.⁷⁹

From all of this, it follows that the individual human person is of ultimate and eternal significance, even, we might say, precisely in his finiteness. This must be reflected in a spirituality which claims to be truly Christian.⁸⁰

Das ist die Grundlage der jedem Menschen zukommenden ewigen Würde. 81

Balthasar sees in Christianity, the only "religion" which at once recognizes the eternal worth and dignity of the individual person and at the same time recognizes that his reality and dignity as a person is not something which he ever "possesses" or achieves, in, by, or from himself. The dignity and value of the individual person can never be relativized or sacrificed. Neither can the individual person find his ultimate dignity and value in a futile effort to absolutize the significance of his own "self".

In his relationship with God, the individual person does not find his fulfillment in an ultimate dissolution of his individuality in the infinite Godhead, nor in the hybristic attempt to assert his own absolute autonomy and so to deny the eternal

difference between Creator and creature. The Trinity remains the source and model, the ultimate goal for all true personal existence in community.⁸²

A spirituality which is trinitarian in this sense, has a basic, grateful optimism with respect to the manifold differences in human life. Those unique aspects of an individual's personality which contribute to his growth as a person would be welcomed and nourished by such a spirituality. Self-denial as a legitimate part of the spiritual life has nothing to do with denial of the unique personality of an individual. Life in the Church, in all its concrete forms, must strive ever to make room for a world of differences, if it is to be a sign of the trinitarian love, which in its "differences", has enough "room" for the world.

"Room enough for the world"--this brings us to the third and final aspects of Balthasar's trinitarian theology and its consequences for Christian spirituality: the world orientation of God and the trinitarian destiny of the world. The Christian is one who must have a positive orientation to the world. The trinitarian God who reveals himself in prayer is never a God indifferent to the world and its destiny, but the Father, who surrendered his Son to the world out of love, so that the world would receive the Spirit and so win a share in God's own life.⁸³

III. TRINITY AND WORLD: THE TWO-FOLD ORIENTATION OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

In the previous section, we pointed out the trinitarian foundation for the self-surrender which characterizes Christian life-in-mission. Seen in terms of the Trinity, where the divine persons appear as different forms of selfless love, the self-surrender required of the Christian does not mean the destruction or denial of his unique personal identity. Rather it means the grace-filled liberation from the privacy of the sinful, self-oriented self into a unique, eternal participation in the personal reality of the risen Christ, in which we have a real share in the divine life of the Trinity. In a word: Eucharist. Life in Christ is "poured out existence" (*verströmte Existenz*), "being-not-for-one's-self, but always being-for-the-other" (*Seinsweise des Nicht-für-sich-, sondern Je-für-den-andern-Seins*).⁸⁴

We stressed that because of the trinitarian gestalt of the divine love, the infinite worth of the finite human creature is established and preserved. It is not destroyed horizontally by the sacrifice of the individual for the "common good" or by the transferal of the significance of human life from the individual to the family, nation or to "humanity" in general. It is not destroyed vertically by the dissolution of the finite human spirit into the infinity of the Godhead or by the self-absolutizing of the finite into the infinite. In the trinitarian God, there is "room" for the

finite spirit in the intimate "distance" between Father and Son in the Holy Spirit. The personal union-in-difference of the immanent Trinity is the ground for the possibility of true union-in-difference between God and the creature.

But the human person does not stand as an isolated being before God. He is part of, and in a way the center of, an entire creation. The cosmos is not just an external "stage" upon which human beings appear and act. It is not simply a supply of material resources which, used and controlled by human beings, do not have any essential, substantial relationship to inner, personal human reality. In other words, one may well distinguish, but ultimately one can not isolate an inner, spiritual realm of "person" and an outer, material realm of "nature". The cosmos, precisely as creation, is a unity. Just as the human person who stands at the center of this uni-verse cannot be divided into two separate parts, spiritual and material, neither can humanity and the "world" be isolated from each other into separate realms.

The entire cosmos and not simply individual persons or humanity as a whole, is called to grace-filled fulfillment in the same trinitarian love which is the condition for the possibility of its creation.⁸⁵

Himmel und Erde sind füreinander da, ihre ursprüngliche und durchgehaltene Distanz ist um ihrer Bewegung aufeinander zu geschaffen. 86

The Johannine summary of the Gospel expresses this exactly: "God so loved *the world* that he sent his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world but that the *world* might be saved through him." (*Jo 3, 16f*)⁸⁷

Together with each individual human person, the entire world is created for fulfillment in God.

Das Christusereignis ist hierin das anführende... nicht nur als ein personales, sondern auch als ein archetypisch-kosmologisches. Und dies wesentlich trinitarisch. 88

To be sure, it is a human world. On the other hand, it is only in his constitutive corporality, in his interdependence with "nature" and in his God-given responsibility for the cosmos, that the human person can enter into the full reality of salvation, the "new heaven and the new earth".⁸⁹

Würde er wie eine Blüte oder Frucht vom Stamm der Welt abgepflückt und zu Gott hinversetzt werden, so wäre weder die Schöpfung als solche gerechtfertigt noch die Arbeit des Menschen an der Welt ernstgenommen. Und die Befreiung, die Gott dem Menschen durch seinen göttlichen Einsatz angedeihen ließe, wäre nicht zugleich die Selbstvollendung des Menschen, auf die hin er durch seinen Schöpfungsauftrag gesetzt worden ist... 90

This means that a truly Christian spirituality is

characterized by a positive stance toward--a loving passion for--the created world. And this is not merely some "fringe" truth of only relative importance. It is grounded in the central mystery of the faith, the Trinity. The creation of the finite world was an expression of the kenotic love of the Trinity, a love which will unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. (*Eph 1, 10*) For Balthasar, the stance of the Christian toward the world is the stance of God himself in Jesus Christ. The Incarnate Son is the expression of God's irrevocable, unbreakable love for the world he created. The Paschal Mystery is the "new covenant" which seals God's love for his creation and leads it into its true fulfillment. The "new heaven and new earth" which result from God's "new covenant" is not an "other" world to "replace" the old one, but the world transformed by God and for God.⁹¹

While eternal life cannot be understood simply as a continuation (*Fortsetzung*) of earthly life, since the two are not only held together, but also held apart (in the case of the individual person by death, and in the case of the world as a whole by the "last day"), nonetheless, the "new world" remains "our very own world".⁹² As Balthasar sees it, the life we have lived on earth isn't just a memory for us in heaven, but something which in heaven attains lasting presence. Everything lived "on earth" in a fragmentary and imperfect way reaches its wholeness and perfection "in heaven".⁹³ As if to emphasize the unity-in-difference, Balthasar calls the question, in which age or phase of life

human beings will rise from the dead, idle. All of our years, he suggests, not just some of them, will rise from the dead! And, in a similar vein, he rejects the assumption that only the final phase of the cosmos--which may well be its most pitiable--will enter into eternity. Everything positive in the development of the world is worthy to enter definitively into God's eternal life.

Was im Werden der Welt in all ihren Entwicklungsstadien ein positives Moment enthält, wird wert sein, am ewig-neuen Ereignis Gottes teilzu-
erhalten. 94

For Balthasar, the destiny of the world, both as material cosmos and as human history, is revealed and eternally established in the risen humanity of Christ.⁹⁵

The Christian, as one who lives in Christ, must manifest the love and fidelity of God to his world. The Christian is called by God to live and work with Christ for the freedom of the world.⁹⁶ Flight from the world in its finitude and materiality is not Christian. In Jesus Christ, God does not save the world from finitude and materiality (which, as constitutive of his creation, are good), but from sin and death.

Likewise, the Christian is called by God, not to flee the world in its sinfulness, but to follow the Lord who conquers sin and death in the world. As

Balthasar frequently points out, the direction of the Church is not centripetal, away from the world, but centrifugal, out into the world. The Church is not a place where believers, having flown from the sinfulness of the world, try to live a life of holiness apart. The Christian is called upon to live and work for the redemption of the world. The Christian can expect, in the words of *Gaudium et Spes*, confrontation, a battle against the powers of darkness at work in the world.⁹⁷ Concretely, it is a strict duty of the Christian to work for social justice, particularly among the poor and oppressed.⁹⁸ The Christian has the responsibility to work with all men and women for the humanization of the world. This means the effort to penetrate and fill the structures of human society with the divine Spirit of love and reconciliation.⁹⁹ It is in the penetration (*Durchdringung*) that the real union between God and the world takes shape and moves towards eternal fulfillment.

Indeed, the Christian has more reason than any other to be committed to the world and its liberation from the power of sin and injustice because for him, the world has eternal, irrevocable significance for God. In the humanity of the risen Lord, it is imbedded in the eternal loving dialogue of the Trinity. The Christian is not only open to the world, but in and with Christ, he is responsible for it.¹⁰⁰ Out of love, God shares his responsibility for the world with his friends.¹⁰¹

The commitment to justice in the world and to the humanization of life has concrete economic and

political dimensions from which the Christian cannot remove himself--precisely as a disciple. Nonetheless, Balthasar stresses that the necessary struggle for economic and political freedom remains part of a more comprehensive battle, the battle of Christ against the powers of sin and death: *die Schlacht des Logos*.¹⁰² Economic and political freedom must be seen in the ultimate horizon of the divine freedom offered to man in Christ. Balthasar has written in recent years with great sympathy for the concerns of "political" or "liberation" theologies, especially because one finds such a great sensitivity to the dramatic and urgent nature of the confrontation between God and sin in this world.¹⁰³

Aber da dieser Appell an die Christen und ihre den Lauf der Welt verändernde, ja entscheidende Mitarbeit ein zentral christlicher Ruf ist, enthüllt er wie bisher kein anderer die dramatische Situation des Christen in der Welt. 104

Especially the horrible, ever-worsening conditions in Latin America require a radical response.¹⁰⁵ Still, where economic and political considerations seem to take precedence, Balthasar warns that the Christian is called upon to work in and with Christ for the Kingdom, not for any particular political or economic system. It is not merely the just reconciliation of broken and unjust human relationships, in their concrete sociological, economic and political forms. The Kingdom is the gracious bestowal of God's own life which is dramatically

revealed to the world in the resurrection of the Son, and the promise of eternal life in the Spirit.

Thus the mission of the Christian is the transformation of the world in the Spirit, a transformation which is essentially conversion. The reform of social structures is ambivalent and ineffective as long as the persons who exercise power and authority through them have not had a real change of heart: *metanoia*.¹⁰⁶ The Christian is called upon to work to change structures that prohibit or inhibit men and women from hearing and actualizing this call to conversion and new life. But the Christian cannot expect that the Kingdom to which we are all called and for which we must all work, can be established within these structures.¹⁰⁷

For Balthasar, this means that the Christian is called to live in an eschatological faith and hope as he strives to love the brethren. This requires the readiness to act for God's concerns in the world, whether through active engagement with Christ in his solidarity with the poor and oppressed, or in patient prayer and suffering in order to "work" with the Crucified Lord for a change of heart and for true repentance.¹⁰⁸ For Balthasar, the hope which is the foundation of Christian engagement in the world is the resurrection of the Crucified One. This is the eschatological anticipation of the Kingdom. Referring to D. Wiederkehr, Balthasar agrees that the belief in the resurrection of the whole human being must become a "praxis of active hope".¹⁰⁹

The Spirit, the "first gift" of the Risen Lord to those who believe, is the *Spiritus Creator*: active in the world, driving, leading from within and at the same time, as the eternal Spirit of the Risen Lord at the Father's right hand, active from above, drawing the world "beyond" itself to its true fulfillment in the Trinity.¹¹⁰ Thus, the primary, vertical dimension of Christian hope is the gift of the Spirit, the first fruits of the Kingdom begun in the resurrection. It is the foundation of the horizontal dimension of Christian hope as the active engagement of Christians in this world.¹¹¹

One can speak of a kind of "critical integration of inner-wordly and absolute future".¹¹² Christian hope knows that the Kingdom of God can never exist in this world ("My Kingdom is not of this world"), but that this world is nonetheless being drawn and transformed by the Spirit in the hearts of believers into its deepest reality in God as his Kingdom.¹¹³

It is in this "divine" hope that the Church is sent into the world, to carry out the mission of the Lord.¹¹⁴ If the Church is to be a pure medium of the presence of God's liberating love--the foundation of the Kingdom--then the Church above all must live in the call to constant conversion. Only when the Church in her own structures and in her loving communion is transparent enough for God's love can she truly be a sign of the Kingdom, a saving light for the world, a credible witness to God's saving act in Jesus Christ.¹¹⁵ Thus a truly Christian

spirituality is self-critical--or better, it places itself, as concrete ecclesial life, under the final norm of the Gospel.

Called to be a light for the nations, the Church does not live merely for herself, but for the world. In the unpredictable variety of the Holy Spirit, who is the inner life of the Church, any truly Christian spirituality will be characterized by a love for the world as it is loved by its Creator, by a passionate concern for the pressing problems of the world, and by readiness, each according to the free inspiration of the Spirit, to live one's life in and with Christ for the salvation of the world.

God opens himself to the world in the Spirit, and through the work of the Spirit, the world is penetrated with divine life and so led into its eternal reality and fulfillment in the Trinity.

Die Naturen der Welt sind aufgebrochen, um in Gottes eigenem Leben vollendet zu werden, Gott aber hat sich ausgegossen, um die Welt mit seiner ewigen Liebe zu durchtränken. Immer neu ist also die drängende Knospe in das Licht von oben zu stellen, in dem allein sie sich erschließen kann, immer neu ist das Licht in alle Weltdunkelheiten hinabzulenken, damit es dort das endgültige Leben erwecke. Diese Liebesbewegung von Himmel und Erde lenkt der Brautführer, der Heilige Geist, und vollendet so das in Christus angeknüpfte Verhältnis mit der Braut Sion-Maria-Ecclesia. Der Christ lebt in der Mitte dieses Ereignisses, das sich durch seine Lebenshingabe an die Liebe auch in ihm und für ihn verwirklichen will. 116

In this beautiful text, Balthasar brings out both the transcendent and the immanent nature of God's relationship with the world: transcendent because God freely pours himself out in love for his creation and in so doing, opens himself up for the world as its eternal life and fulfillment; immanent because the Spirit of God's love truly penetrates the world and fills it with life from within.

Christian spirituality manifests the two-fold nature of God's relationship to the world in its two-fold orientation. But this two-fold orientation--Trinity-World--is really a single, trinitarian orientation. It is the trinitarian orientation which characterizes the fourth week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. (§235-7) It sees God in all things and all things in God. God has made the earth his dwelling place so that the earth can find its dwelling place in him. (comp. Eph 4, 6; 4, 10; 1 Cor 15, 28; Col 1, 17)

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have suggested that the fundamental trinitarian dimension of Christian spirituality has three important characteristics, which correspond to the central characteristics of Balthasar's trinitarian theology. First, Christian spirituality must be contemplative. The Christian is called to follow the call of the ever-greater God in the absolute freedom of the Holy Spirit who mediates God's will, ever-new. He is not to carry out some

pre-fabricated spiritual "program"--much less his own individual insights. The action of the Christian in and for the world can only be fruitful if he remains in the living source of all fruitfulness: Christ. Contemplation is the foundation of such a posture of loving union with the Lord and of indifferent readiness to be sent: in the Spirit.

Secondly, a truly Christian spirituality manifests itself in self-sacrificing love in community. It is through death to self as life for others that the Christian grows in true maturity and freedom, and so "fulfills" himself. Better: is fulfilled. The demand to surrender one's self in a life for others becomes concrete in the love of the community which rejoices in the variety of gifts and difference of persons, and which endures in hope the failure of the community to actualize the love to which it is called.

Finally, a truly Christian spirituality understands Christian life as active service in and for the world. In its orientation to God, it is irrevocably oriented to the world. The most authentic "religious" service to God is the obedient entrance into the eucharistic sacrifice of his Son for the world. A Christian must understand his life as a life for the salvation of the world which is so loved by God. The deeper his union with God, the more he will experience himself sent with the Son.¹¹⁷

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

I. THE THEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Having reached the end of a long process of investigation, study and reflection, I am all too aware of the fact that a systematic presentation of Balthasar's various statements about the Holy Spirit and about life in the Spirit seems dry and lifeless in comparison with the texts themselves. For the reader who is prepared to enter into the initially difficult and complicated world of Balthasar's theology--a world difficult both in its specific approach or "method" and in its terminology and style--there awaits an experience of genuine beauty and power. Most everyone who has written on Balthasar has remarked how difficult it is to situate him and to investigate and evaluate his work in terms of traditional theological concepts. This is especially true when one is considering the Spirit. Unfortunately, the really inspirational power of Balthasar's work in its orientation to Christian life is precisely what a reflection upon his work cannot communicate. I think of how often Balthasar insists, for example, that it is only the gestalt of Christ himself which can "convince" and "cause" faith--not theological reflection upon this gestalt. In a similar way, I think that only personal confrontation with Balthasar's work can "convince" one of the inner unity of theology and spirituality which reveals itself there. This study cannot. All we hope to

have done is to show the dogmatic foundation of Christian spirituality, or to put it in other words, to sketch out the broad lines of the "theoretical structure"¹ of Christian life in the Spirit, as suggested by Balthasar's "pneumatology".

One of the life-long desires of Hans Urs von Balthasar has been to restore the broken unity between dogmatic theology and spirituality.² Theological reflection and Christian life in the Spirit are essentially interdependent. History has shown that their separation has often resulted either in abstract, esoteric theological speculation with little power to speak to the concrete life situation or in "spiritual literature" of questionable theological substance. As Balthasar once pointed out, the history of theology proves that the theologies which were truly effective were precisely those which carried their "spirituality" within, and not alongside themselves.³ Theology and spirituality are two aspects of one whole: the concrete experience of the Spirit in the life of faith. Balthasar calls spirituality the subjective side of dogmatic theology.⁴ Theological reflection, on the other hand, must be oriented toward the more authentic practice of Christian faith, hope and love. The Spirit promised by Jesus to lead us "into the fullness of truth" is not only a Spirit of intellectual enlightenment, but also a Spirit of existential transformation.

Not every Spirit, however, is from God. Theological reflection is necessary for the concrete discernment of spirits. To live "in the Spirit" is to be transformed in a very specific way: into the

form or likeness of Christ, who is the fullness of truth. The "incarnation" of the form of Christ in the flesh of the Christian is the existential side of the confession of the Christian that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh".⁵

The purpose of this study has been to understand a bit more of the mystery of life in the Spirit. In order to answer the question "What is life in the Spirit for the Christian?", one must answer the question "What or who is this Spirit in whom we live?". The attempt to answer this question guided the dogmatic considerations of the first part of this study. There we inquired as to the person and role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, the Incarnation and in the Church. By paying particular attention to the specific role of the Spirit in each of these areas, it became clear that these "mysteries" are essentially interrelated. The central event of the Incarnation--the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ--is both the revelation of God's innermost self as self-surrendering, trinitarian love, and at the same time the foundation of the Church as the pouring out of this love in the Spirit. In other words, the eucharistic event of the cross and resurrection of Christ is both the revelation of the "eucharistic kenosis" in love of the immanent Trinity and the foundation of the eucharistic, kenotic existence of the Church as the Body-Bride of Christ. The Spirit is the ever-greater fruit and gift of God's own self as self-surrendering love in the Trinity, in the Incarnation and in the life of the Church.

We saw that the Spirit is both the "content" and the living "form" of God's love. It is the Spirit who is the fruit and fullness of the love between the Father and the Son and holds it in its trinitarian form. It is the Spirit who forms and fills the mission-existence of Christ as the eschatological gestalt of God's love in the world. It is the Spirit, breathed out by the Risen Lord into the Church, who mediates this gestalt in history and continues to form and fill the personal existence of men and women with the divine love, and so draws the whole world into its final, eternal goal: the eternal life of the Trinity.

Thus new life in the Spirit and experience of the Spirit in its fullness always has a trinitarian, a Christological and an ecclesiological dimension. Life in the Spirit, in all its historical diversity, has a certain "dogmatic" structure or form. This is what we showed in the second part of this study. From the dogmatic considerations of the first part concerning the person and mission of the Holy Spirit, we were able to point out certain ecclesiological, Christological and trinitarian dimensions inherent in life in the Spirit. These three dimensions form the heart of a truly Christian spirituality and can serve to some extent as a foundation for concrete discernment of spirits.

As we said above, not every spirit is from God. 1 *John* provides a criterion which is reflected strongly in Balthasar's theology: the spirit

which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. Balthasar's pneumatology is developed in a decidedly incarnational context. Everything which has to do with God's taking on flesh in the world--the Incarnation of the Son, its essential and necessary "continuation" and "fulfillment" in Christ's Body-Bride, the Church, and the eschatological fulfillment of the world in which God takes the flesh of the world "into himself"--all this is the work of the Spirit. Thus, to confess Jesus Christ in the flesh means that the experience of the Spirit in its fullness always has ecclesiological, Christological and trinitarian dimensions. Where one dimension is forgotten or totally absent, something is wrong.

In examining the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar with a view toward coming to a better understanding of what life in the Spirit is, we have collected and organized--at least to some extent!--an enormous amount of material. Balthasar has never written a systematic treatment of the Spirit; nonetheless, the Spirit plays a central role in everything he has ever written. Neither has he written a comprehensive treatment of Christian spirituality; nonetheless, the existential orientation toward Christian life dominates all his theology. We have investigated what might be called the theoretical--or better, the theological structure of Christian life in Balthasar's work. As such, our treatment was necessarily formal and abstracted from many specific, concrete experiences, traditions and problem areas in the history of spirituality. The limited nature of any study is inevitable. At the end of our investigation, it

seems appropriate in a succinct, summary fashion to reflect upon what we have seen, and to consider what seem to be its strengths and weaknesses. Following the structure of our presentation, we shall turn our attention first to the ecclesiological, then to the Christological and finally to the trinitarian dimension of Christian spirituality.

II. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A. Even a brief consideration of Balthasar's ecclesiology reveals its center. The Church is the Body-Bride of Christ. This image, and other expressions such as "continuation of the Incarnation" or "elongation of Christ", reveal that the central significance and the personal reality of the Church for Balthasar are grounded in Christ by virtue of the Holy Spirit which animates it. While stressing the analogical nature of the Church's personal union with Christ--in the ever-greater difference between body and Head, bride and Bridegroom--Balthasar nonetheless "reduces" everything of saving significance about the Church to Christ.⁶ As the new Eve created by God out of the side of the second Adam on the cross, the Church is born of the Holy Spirit, Blood and Water--the inner substance of Christ--and has no identity "of her own" apart from Christ. Clearly, it is Balthasar's intention to stress the essential, intrinsic relationship between the Christ event and the Church, precisely as part of God's on-going active self-communication in the world.

Two things are important here. First, the Church is primarily the work of God, not the work of human beings. Secondly, the Church is not merely a new "stage" after the Christ event; it is already intrinsically present in the Paschal Mystery. This is clear for Balthasar in the eucharistic unity between the death of Christ and the surrender of the Spirit on the cross ("once and for all") and the Last Supper, in which the Lord draws the disciples ontologically into his sacrifice as the necessary condition for the eucharistic celebration and actualization of the Church ("Do this in memory of me").

Indeed, the fact that the Church is born of the Spirit from the cross (or from the Risen Crucified One) is the sign and guarantee of this inner unity. Thus for Balthasar, the reality of the Church as response to God's act in Jesus Christ, while always present and real in the Marian *Fiat*, is clearly secondary. The deepest reality of the Church is found for Balthasar in the order of God's self-revelation. The order of the human response of faith is necessary, but secondary.

It is no wonder that the expression "People of God" plays a very minor role in Balthasar's ecclesiology. Even here, the reality of the Church as human response is grounded in the fundamental Marian response, as unique creation and indefectible, infallible sacrament of God's saving love, analogous to the way in which Christ himself is God's infallible and irrevocable self-surrender in love. It is worth reflecting

on the fact that Balthasar calls both Christ and the Church *Ur-sakrament*.

Surely, one must understand such usage analogously. Ultimately, as we have already pointed out, it is Balthasar's theological notion of person as identical with mission, that leads him to stress the identity-in-difference of the Church with Christ in her mission to be the sacrament of God's saving love in the world. But how can one bring out more clearly the ever-greater difference to which Balthasar himself always refers? The Church can never speak the words of Christ: "He who sees me sees the Father"! It is precisely here where all of this becomes problematic: in the concrete, visible Church. It is not hard to agree with Balthasar, for example, that both word and sacrament must serve as concrete, objective norms for Christian life in the Spirit, precisely as the concrete forms in which the Spirit makes the Christ event present and actual. Further, one need have no great problem understanding the function of hierarchical office as ministry to word and sacrament or as ministry to unity in the Church, in the diversity of concrete charisms and missions. Eucharist cannot be celebrated, scripture cannot be interpreted alone. The unity-in-diversity of the concrete Church is frequently threatened by sin and selfishness. But also by misuse of authority! The obedience to hierarchical authority which Balthasar suggests is grounded in Christ's perfect, unquestioning obedience to the Father, seems exaggerated.

There is no doubt that Balthasar has been able to

present a genuinely theological and spiritual understanding of institution and authority in the Church in such a way that institution and authority are integrated with ecclesial love and obedience in the life of the Spirit. However, while it may be true that the relationship of the man Jesus to the Father in the Holy Spirit is the "concrete model" for the exercise of authority and obedience in the Church⁷, it seems that Balthasar does not stress the ever-greater difference in this analogy. This must be done, not only in the comparison between the man Jesus and the Christian in the act of ecclesial obedience, but even more so in the comparison between the Father, active through the Spirit, and the hierarchical office in the exercise of authority. Not every exercise of authority in the Church is "from the Spirit". Balthasar certainly makes room for dissent and criticism in the Church--theoretically. The saints, those who actualize the Marian holiness of the Church, are the best and most authentic critics of the Church in her sinfulness. But, one has the feeling that Balthasar is basically "critical"--even suspicious--of most criticism in the Church. Perhaps he has good reason. Nonetheless, it would be a great service, and perhaps a needed addition to his well developed theology of obedience, if Balthasar would present a theology of dissent. One can at least ask if obedience is always of the Spirit or if disobedience is always against the Spirit.⁸

A second difficulty for Christian spirituality also seems to arise from Balthasar's ecclesiology:

namely, his tendency to categorize the "religions" of the world simply as expressions of the human search for God, in distinction to Christian revelation as God's search for man. In an age when the Catholic Church has once again begun to stress evangelization as a priority, and since the question of inculturation of the faith is so important in the Church's missionary activity, the question regarding the Spirit's presence and saving activity in other world religions has special significance and urgency. It seems a pity that a theologian with such a sense for the utter freedom and newness of the Spirit of the "ever-greater" God, does not convey a more positive attitude toward non-Christian religions. As we have seen, Balthasar clearly follows the teaching of Vatican II in acknowledging the presence and saving activity of the Spirit in other Christian confessions, as well as the truth, goodness, and possibility of salvation in non-Christian religions. However, this optimism, grounded in the incomprehensible universal saving will of God, seems overshadowed by the pessimistic conviction that the truth found in other religions is most often merely a fragmentary or distorted form of the fullness of the truth of Christ, and that the inherent fullness of the Catholic faith is being eroded in the West. Balthasar admits that Christians can and must learn from other religions and cultural traditions, but such statements sound so abstract in view of his constant emphasis on the absolute fullness of God's revelation in Christ and the objective fullness of its mediation in the *Catholica*.

When Balthasar addressed several hundred American theologians some years ago⁹, he expressed his concern that the substance of Christianity was being hollowed out by the inroads of Eastern meditation methods, so that in many monasteries Christian meditation has become nothing more than a question of posture and breathing technique, while the essential reality and necessity of repentance and intercessory prayer has been forgotten.¹⁰ He sees the unique and indivisible gestalt of Catholicism compromised in the name of religious and theological pluralism, and rejects such notions as "anonymous Christianity" and similar views which see all religions as paths to salvation. Such statements, together with the fact that Balthasar has never written in depth on non-biblical religions, lead one to question how seriously his statements adverting to the possibility and necessity of the Church's learning from other religions are to be taken.

For a variety of reasons, Balthasar has focused and limited (!) his work. We all must! His efforts have been directed to the witness, reflection and mediation of the fullness of the Catholic tradition rather than to the investigation of and the on-going dialogue with other religions.¹¹ No one person can do everything, and in this effort, Balthasar has immensely enriched Catholic theology, the spiritual life of many Christians and the understanding many non-Christians have of Christianity. Still, it is regrettable that a theologian with such a profound knowledge of and sensibility for the Catholic tradition has not devoted more time to

the problems of ecumenism and the dialogue with non-biblical religions.

The fruitfulness of the Church's meeting and dialogue with other religions will depend in large measure whether or not she expects to find the Spirit there. It seems to me that an important task for ecclesiology today, especially in relation to an adequate theology of the Holy Spirit, is to be able to speak of the absoluteness of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ in such a way that takes seriously the imperfect, sinful reality of the Church, and not only tolerates and allows dialogue with other religions, but shows convincingly why this is necessary. It seems to me to be a weakness in Balthasar's ecclesiology, and a danger in the corresponding spirituality, that, while he admits the presence of the Spirit in other religions, the real presence of the Spirit there seems to have little practical significance for the Church and for Christian life.

On the other hand, the strong ecclesial character of Balthasar's understanding of Christian spirituality manifests important strengths particularly in view of the contemporary situation within the Church. He emphasizes the essentially communal nature of spiritual experience and of life in the Spirit. Although the Spirit is given to each individual in a unique way which constitutes his or her personhood before God, this gift is always given within the living community of faith, the Church. Faith is always part of a living tradition. This is especially

important today, when so many Christians no longer have a living relationship with the Church.

"Jesus, yes--the institutional Church, no!" is heard more and more frequently.¹² The readiness to live and work in and for the life of the whole Church is a good criterion for the authenticity of the experience of the Spirit in smaller groups within the Church--whether in "unofficial" charismatic prayer groups and *Basis-Gemeinden*, or in the "officially" recognized groups within the Church: religious orders, secular institutes and various "movements". Neither the life of the Spirit nor the particular charisms of the Spirit are "private" property of individual believers or groups of believers. The gifts of grace are for all. Balthasar correctly emphasizes that the deeper and more intimate the personal union of the believer with Christ, the more intimate the experience of the Spirit, the more social and apostolic is his ecclesial orientation. Individualistic piety is not Christian.

One of the great strengths of Balthasar's understanding of the work of the Spirit in the life of the individual believer is precisely the stress on what he calls the "expropriation" of the individual out of his private existence into the truly personal existence in Christ as life for others. He correctly notes the necessity of the institutional character of the Church, not only as a sociological, but more radically as a divine reality, for the concrete mediation of new life and freedom for the *communio*. Thus everything in the Church is relative in two

directions: first toward Christ, whose presence she mediates, and secondly toward the actual life of faith as the concrete love of the *communio*. Scripture, sacraments, tradition and office are all essential, but provisional and mediatory. It is solely the active love of God and neighbor which is the heart and goal of the life in the Spirit in the Church. Ultimately, the self-surrendering love of God, revealed in Christ, is the criterion of the authenticity of all experience of the Holy Spirit.

B. We now wish to turn our attention to the Christological dimension of Christian spirituality. As we inquired more precisely as to the real significance of his dimension, we saw that when Balthasar speaks of the new, personal "life for others", he means representative existence as a real share in the saving representation (*Stellvertretung*) of Jesus Christ. It seems to me that Balthasar throws light on one of the most important dimensions of Christian life here. It has been emphasized already that the gift of God's Spirit is never a purely private affair. Each of us is saved and given a share in God's life as part of the whole Body of Christ. Moreover, while the fact that each of us is saved through God's gracious act in Jesus Christ constitutes the basically "passive" or "receptive" posture of each Christian and of the whole Church vis-a-vis the redeeming God, Balthasar suggests that part of the gift of grace we receive is the capability and calling to participate actively in the saving mission of Christ in the world. While all salvation comes from God alone,

the mystery of Christian existence is that, precisely because of the Christian's real personal union with Christ, he receives a share in Christ's saving mission. For Balthasar, the direct foundation of Christian existence "for others" in the representative *pro multis* of Christ, gives it a totally different significance and reality than non-biblical or Old Testament representation.¹³ The inner union of person and mission on the one hand, and the notion of inclusive representation on the other hand, enable Balthasar to underline the real responsibility which each Christian has in building up the Kingdom. The promise that Jesus makes to the two disciples James and John, that they shall indeed share in the cup from which Jesus himself must drink, is a promise and command directed to all Christians.

The participation that we have in Christ's saving suffering and death is not merely externally additive to or illustrative of Christ's redemptive work, but an innerly essential and necessary (because so willed by God) part of it. Thus, Balthasar's splendid characterization of existence in the Spirit as engagement with the on-going action of God for the salvation of the world. Christian life is existence-in-mission, existence as participation in the saving mission of Christ.

Balthasar has performed an enormous service to the Church is reminding us of this fact. Before the differentiation of Christian ecclesial life in various forms and functions, all Christians are called by virtue of Baptism into the death of Christ *pro multis*, to active participation in his

saving work. Not just priests, not just members of religious orders, but each and every Christian is called and sent in active ministry for the upbuilding of the Kingdom. All of us are called to let the saving love of God take flesh in our lives. Whatever is done out of love is fruitful for the Kingdom and for the salvation of the world. Active love is the *unum necessarium* and the only reliable sign of "success" in the Christian community: that Christians are actually fulfilling the Lord's words: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (*Jo 13, 35*)

Since the cross of Christ is the unsurpassable expression of God's love for us, Christian love will always find its source and sustaining power there, in God's self-surrender. Here again, is a real strength of Balthasar's: the centrality of the cross. The Spirit will lead all men and women into the fullness of the truth as it is revealed there. It is there that the Spirit leads us from the lie of sinful selfishness into the truth of selfless love. For this reason, the true sign of Christian love, according to Balthasar, is fundamentally its willingness to suffer.

This is not to be misunderstood as a kind of masochistic passivity or resignation. It means in the broadest sense to die to sinful self-centeredness, to surrender one's self-made securities and defenses and to be open and vulnerable both to the needs of suffering humanity and to the God who, taking the sin and death of this world upon himself, continues to bring grace and new life to all.

In all that he does, the Christian is called into solidarity with those who suffer and into saving solidarity with Christ who suffers for the salvation of the world. Just how one is called to participate in Christ's cross for the salvation of the world is not a matter of one's own decision. This is an utterly unique invitation from God, which constitutes each individual's personhood. The concrete form of each "vocation" is left to the Spirit in his freedom. It cannot be predicted or programmed. Balthasar is right to stress the consequent need for personal freedom (the goal of St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*) and openness, so that one can hear God's call as he speaks in the Church, especially through the scriptures, in personal prayer and in the concrete situations of life. In any case, the goal of a Christian will not be the rather egoistic "self-fulfillment" which has characterized Western society in the last decade, but the desire to serve in selfless love.

Indeed, it is the absolute necessity of the contemplative, obedient posture of prayer which seeks the will of the Lord in all things, which Balthasar underscores again and again. This has nothing to do with apathetic contemplation, of either Greek philosophy or of some forms of Eastern meditation. Neither should it be motivated by the desire to "experience" new and unusual psychic "states". It is the posture of human freedom in passionate indifference to everything except the will of God: loving obedience as attentive readiness to be sent. One of Balthasar's great services has been to show convincingly how the

active life of the Christian is grounded in the fundamentally contemplative act of loving obedience.

C. This brings us directly to the central trinitarian dimension of Christian spirituality for Balthasar. Christian existence, in the inner unity between contemplation and action, between "mystical" union and apostolic vocation, is at heart a trinitarian reality. The trinitarian structure of Christian existence is manifested most of all in prayer.

Prayer must form the center of a Christian's life precisely as one who is sent by the utterly free God. For Balthasar, prayer, both as contemplation of the *Offenbarungsgestalt* and as intercession, is an encounter in freedom between infinite freedom and finite freedom. Both what the Father has to say to me in his word, and what I have to say to him in response, occurs in freedom. If Christianity were nothing more than an ethical system or a doctrine of spiritual perfection, there wouldn't really be any need for prayer. One could at most beg God's help in fulfilling certain ethical or spiritual requirements or ideals which were already revealed and known. Christianity and Christian prayer are much more than this. Precisely from his dynamic notion of God as ever-greater, ever-free in the Holy Spirit to "exceed" himself, to reveal himself in new and surprising ways, demanding new and surprising things from the individual believer and from the Church as a whole, Balthasar correctly locates the true significance of prayer in the

drama of the confrontation between infinite and finite freedom. What God's will is for me in each concrete situation is never something already fixed and known, but something ever-new and living.

And it is precisely in the living relationship of prayer between God and the believer that God reveals his will. Certainly this personal relationship is not private and isolated; it exists within the larger context of the Church. But it is primary. The "objective" forms or structures in the Church--scripture, sacraments, tradition, office--are all means directed toward making this living dialogue between God and the believer possible. They can never act as a substitute for it. Thus, it is important to point out that Balthasar's strong emphasis the ecclesial nature and mediation of grace and mission really always presumes a fundamentally personal, individual relationship between the believer and God in prayer. It is there, heart to heart, that God calls. It is there that the believer must listen, ready to respond. The Church does not "create" vocations or missions. At most, she can officially recognize, support and coordinate them for the good of the whole Church. Even in this she can fail.

Ecclesial obedience is no substitution for personal confrontation with the living God in prayer. A merely passive obedience to Church authority may give the believer some assurance that he is not sinning, but it is no guarantee that he has searched for, found, or is doing God's will!

The history of the Church knows many great saints who in loving obedience, had to fight to accomplish the mission which God gave them because the office holders in the Church were blind to God's will. St. Ignatius can stand as one example among many who remained faithful to their mission and obedient (in a critical and active way!) in the Church despite the opposition met from Church authority.

Thus far we have been speaking primarily about contemplative prayer as the living foundation of Christian life-in-mission. The believer attempts to live in openness and indifference before God so that God can reveal his will in the concrete situations of his life. The necessity for this attentive, contemplative posture is founded in God's absolute freedom. We now wish to turn our attention to another kind of prayer which should, according to Balthasar, characterize a truly Christian spirituality: petitionary prayer or prayer of intercession.

The significance of petitionary prayer is ultimately found, for Balthasar, in the trinitarian structure of divine freedom and in the divine "kenosis" by virtue of which man is granted a real participation in this freedom. At the heart of Balthasar's dynamic notion of God as ever-greater is the inner-trinitarian kenosis. God's absolute freedom reveals itself as the power of utter self-surrender. God's freedom is so absolute that he can share it without ceasing to be God. His love is so powerful that he can pour himself out

in love and not "lose" himself. Thus it is, that the mystery of human freedom is grounded in the reality of the kenosis of the divine freedom, which without jeopardizing its absoluteness, nonetheless shares itself with man, and sharing it, truly respects man's freedom. That is to say, God freely makes himself "vulnerable" before man's freedom. This leads Balthasar to suggest that God truly suffers for and with his creation and that he is deeply affected by each human decision in freedom. It seems to me to be correct to understand this from the kenotic perspective which Balthasar has adopted and modified from Bulgakow and others.

Balthasar makes the interesting suggestion that we should understand intercessory prayer from this point of view. Intercessory prayer is more than practised resignation or acceptance of God's otherwise unchanging will. It is based on the real share that man has in the Spirit in God's freedom, by virtue of the divine kenosis. The more the Christian allows the form of Christ to determine his existence, the more he finds himself with the freedom of God in all its spontaneity. Balthasar suggests that God gives us a share in the spontaneity and creativity of his Spirit, the more we surrender ourselves to him. Thus, there is a kind of *commercium admirabile* of wills to the extent that there is a *concordia*, a union of hearts between God and the believer. Balthasar locates this paradoxical relationship in the Trinity where the one divine freedom is nonetheless shared by each of the three persons in such a way that each

person is "granted" or "allowed" a particular "realm" of freedom by the other two persons. Quoting Adrienne von Speyr, Balthasar suggests that it is the very essence of the divine freedom to be freely vulnerable before the wishes of the other--to consider and respect the other's freedom. In the immanent Trinity, "God takes God into consideration" in the personal relationships between Father, Son and Spirit.¹⁴ In the economy of salvation, God takes human freedom into consideration and lets it "influence" him. This all the more so that the believer is filled with the Spirit, who, according to Balthasar, is the personal expression both of the absoluteness and the utter freedom of decision and execution of the divine will.

The believer is given a share in the very freedom of the Spirit. The Spirit does not speak on his own authority--he speaks what he hears from the Son--but he is nonetheless given the absolute freedom of the concrete expression and actualization. Thus, the concrete petitions of the believer, can in the Spirit be genuinely "free" expression of the all-encompassing desire "thy will be done".

The strength of this approach is the recovery of the biblical appreciation for the essentially dynamic, personal and dramatic character of the relationship between God and the world in freedom. Balthasar seeks a new path between the often static, classical notion of God, which conceived absoluteness as changelessness and indifference, and more recent attempts of process philosophy

and theology which seem to identify divine and human freedom and history. Once again in his latest book, *Theodramatik IV: Das Endspiel*, Balthasar suggests a new approach to the mystery of the unchangeability of God precisely in his ever-greater freedom and self-surrendering vulnerability.

One critical question might be raised here. Balthasar speaks of the divine freedom of the Trinity in such a way that the one divine freedom which God "has" or "is", is shared by each of the persons in a unique way, determined by the "realm" allowed by the other two persons. Often the inner-trinitarian "opposition" of the persons seems so extremely drawn, that one has the impression that one is dealing not with one, trinitarian freedom, but with three. What is, more precisely, the nature of the participation of each person in the one, divine freedom?

This becomes especially problematic since in the realm of creation, freedom is something which pertains to the human being precisely in his uniqueness as person, whereas in the Trinity, the divine freedom is possessed by God in his unity. Balthasar suggests that finite freedom is a participation in God's freedom and that it finds its ground in the inner-trinitarian participation of Father, Son and Spirit. It would be helpful to ask more precisely what the nature of this human participation in God's freedom is. To the extent that one could develop this more precisely, one could make an important

divine love, both the "form" and the "content" of divine love as ever-greater, self-surrendering freedom. The Holy Spirit is the former (*Gestalter*) of the mission-existence of Jesus Christ, the personal revelation of the immanent trinitarian love in the concrete, economic form of the loving obedience unto death of the Incarnate Son. Finally, the Holy Spirit, as the mediating, transforming power of the historical gestalt of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, is the *Gestalter* of existence "in Christ" through the re-presentation and actualization of the *Christus-gestalt* in the Church.

Balthasar's own particular emphases in each of these areas have greatly influenced his understanding of authentic Christian spirituality. We have seen how his ecclesiological emphasis upon the Marian-bridal reality of the Church as the ontological condition for the possibility of all individual responses in faith leads him to stress the essentially ecclesial nature of life in the Spirit. The Church is the (only) concrete place where the Lord bestows his Spirit (in its fullness). This takes place through concrete forms of mediation. Christian spirituality, therefore, cannot play off interior life and exterior structure against each other. From a Christian point of view, true structure--as gestalt--is never simply "external".

Balthasar's Christological emphasis on the inclusive character of Christ's saving representation (*Stellvertretung*) leads him to stress the

and the spirituality built upon it anti-political. Balthasar wishes to remind us of what the "one thing necessary" is in all Christian action. While Balthasar may occasionally express reserve or doubts with respect to some recent "political" or "liberation" theologies, it seems to me--especially in view of his stated sympathy with such approaches--that the main reason for his hesitancy to suggest concrete "programs" is precisely his conviction that each Christian must listen to the Spirit who reveals to each individual just how he or she is called upon to enter into God's own action in and for the world. Neither a general "justification" of the necessity of political responsibility on the part of the believer, nor an "apologetics" of the necessity and fruitfulness of the monastic life can ever relieve the individual believer from the responsibility to listen to the Spirit. That is where he will find out where God wishes to send him and what he is to do.

III. CONCLUSION

As a result of our study, we can see how the central mystery of faith, God's self-revelation and communication in Jesus Christ, is related to the mystery of Christian life, our new existence in the Spirit. Considering each of the three central aspects of this one mystery--Trinity, Incarnation and Church--from the point of view of the person and role of the Holy Spirit, has led to a deeper appreciation of how they are interrelated. In the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the gestalt of the

divine love, both the "form" and the "content" of divine love as ever-greater, self-surrendering freedom. The Holy Spirit is the former (*Gestalter*) of the mission-existence of Jesus Christ, the personal revelation of the immanent trinitarian love in the concrete, economic form of the loving obedience unto death of the Incarnate Son. Finally, the Holy Spirit, as the mediating, transforming power of the historical gestalt of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, is the *Gestalter* of existence "in Christ" through the re-presentation and actualization of the *Christus-gestalt* in the Church.

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Balthasar's Christological emphasis on the inclusive character of Christ's saving representation (*Stellvertretung*) leads him to stress the

soteriological-representative character of life in the Spirit. Christians don't simply live "after the fact" of the redemption, but are called to enter ontologically into the cross and resurrection of Christ, and so to play a genuine, truly personal role in the salvation of the world. Thus, the ecclesial mystery of the *communio sanctorum* is at its depths soteriologically founded in Christ's *pro multis*.

Finally, Balthasar's trinitarian emphasis on God's ability to be ever-greater in his utter freedom, and ever-greater in his divine self-surrender, leads him to stress the dynamic, dialogical nature of the relationship between God and the believer in the Spirit. Prayer--the obedient contemplation in faith of the gestalt of God's revelation--is the heart of Christian spirituality. And, the heart of prayer is the necessity of living in open self-surrender before God, ready and willing to receive the Spirit and to be sent with a concrete mission to fulfill. The more the Christian empties himself in obedience, giving "room" to the Spirit, the more he is led into the heart of God's own freedom, where he finds the only true, eternal fulfillment of his finite existence.

This is perhaps Balthasar's most original contribution toward a contemporary Christian spirituality. Life in the Spirit is radically life in contemplative, obedient receptivity vis-a-vis the absolutely free God. But, it is at the same time existence in active, creative mission, in which the individual experiences both the liberation and fulfillment

of his own finite existence and the call to join God in his on-going engagement in the world through the Spirit. In a way, one might say that Balthasar has "recovered" the true meaning of Marian spirituality as a hallmark of Christian life. In so doing, the spirit of Ignatius of Loyola is unmistakably present.

He correctly sees the trinitarian mystery at the heart of Christian life, as exemplified in both of these persons. Only a spirituality so completely founded in and permeated by the mystery of trinitarian love can go beyond a false dualism which opposes contemplation and action, obedience and loving freedom, the infinite God and the finite creation. Only a trinitarian spirituality is able to take seriously both divine freedom and human freedom, precisely because it understands human freedom as created by and fulfilled in divine freedom. Only a trinitarian spirituality lives both from the reality of God's eternal, saving will and in the world's real history and future, precisely because it sees the world's real history and future as saved--"gathered up"--into the eternal love of the Trinity. Only a trinitarian spirituality can recognize both the absolute claim that God has on the world and the absolute value that the world has for God.

Only the trinitarian love revealed in the cross and resurrection of Christ can ground the hope of the world in the future of love and is worthy of the total surrender of faith: a surrender which understands itself as existence in God's loving, self-surrendering engagement in and for the world.

FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations of frequently cited works of Hans Urs von Balthasar are found at the beginning of the bibliography, pp. 594ff. In addition, the following abbreviations appear in the footnotes:

<i>AAS</i>	Acta Apostolicae Sedis, Rome 1909ff.
<i>EthL</i>	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Brügge 1924ff.
<i>HK</i>	Herder-Korrespondenz, Freiburg 1946ff.
<i>HWPB</i>	Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Basel 1971ff.
<i>IKZ</i>	Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio, Rodenkirchen 1972ff.
<i>LThK</i>	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg ² 1957.
<i>MySal</i>	Mysterium Salutis. Grundriß heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik, hrsg. v. J. Feiner und M. Löhrer, Einsiedeln/Zürich/Köln 1965ff.
<i>ThLZ</i>	Theologische Literaturzeitung, Leipzig 1878ff.
<i>TS</i>	Theological Studies, Baltimore 1940ff.
<i>ZKTh</i>	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, Wien 1886ff.

Introduction

1. W. Abbott SJ (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II*, New York 1966, 714.
2. Ibid., 793.
3. SC 232. See Balthasar's characterization of the council: SC 218-36.
4. *Adhortatio Apostolica Evangelii nuntiandi*, Nr. 75 in AAS 68 (1976), 66.
5. W. Barry SJ and W. Connolly SJ, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, New York 1982, viif.
6. L. Bouyer, "Mystisch--Zur Geschichte eines Wortes" in J. Sudbrack (ed.), *Das Mysterium und die Mystik*, Würzburg 1974, 73. This essay first appeared in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Supplement 9 (1949), 3-23. Sudbrack has edited the German translation which appeared in 1950 in *Liturgie und Mönchtum II*, 17-32.
7. J. Sudbrack, "Die Geist-Einheit von Heilsgeheimnis und Heilserfahrung" in *Das Mysterium*, op. cit., 32.
8. Ibid., 37.
9. See O. A. Dilschneider, "Die Geistvergessenheit der Theologie. Epilog über den historischen Jesus und kerygmatischen Christus," in ThLZ 86, 255-66; _____, "Die Notwendigkeit neuer Antworten auf neue Fragen. Auf dem Weg zum dritten Glaubensartikel: Ich glaube an den Heiligen Geist" in C. Heitmann/H. Mühlen (eds.), *Erfahrung und Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, München 1974, 151-61; H. Mühlen, "Soziale Geisterfahrung als Antwort auf eine einseitige Gotteslehre" in C. Heitmann/H. Mühlen, op. cit., 253-72; W. Kasper, "Geistvergessenheit in Theologie und Kirche" in W. Kasper/G. Sauter, *Kirche--Ort des Geistes*, Freiburg 1976, 14-25; _____, "Aspekte gegenwärtiger Pneumatologie" in

Introduction

- W. Kasper (ed.), *Gegenwart des Geistes. Aspekte der Pneumatologie*, Freiburg 1979, 7-22; Y. Congar, "Pneumatologie ou 'Christomonisme' dans la tradition latine?" in *Ecclesia a Spiritu sancto edocta*, Gembloux 1970, 41-63; H. Berkhof, *Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, Neukirchen 1968 (rev. German translation).
10. A. Rotzetter (ed.), *Geist wird Leib*, Zürich 1979. This is the first in a series of books published by the Institute for Spirituality at the University of Münster under the title, *Seminar Spiritualität*. See Rotzetter's article therein, "Theologie und Spiritualität," 19-39. Two more volumes have also been published: *Geist und Geistesgaben* (1980) and *Geist und Welt* (1981). These books are especially valuable for the extensive bibliographies.
 11. Ibid., 23.
 12. Ibid., 23.
 13. Ibid., 25.
 14. Ibid., 27.
 15. Ibid., 28.
 16. Ibid., 29f.
 17. Ibid., 29.
 18. Ibid., 30f.
 19. Ibid., 21n5.
 20. J. Sudbrack SJ, "Um den Stellenwert der Spiritualität im Gesamt der Theologie" in *Geist und Leben* 37 (1964), 387-93. For a good background on this question, and on spirituality in general, see Sudbrack's contribution to the article "Spirituality" in *Encyclopedia of Theology. The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, New York 1975, 1623-34.
 21. Ibid., 390.

Introduction

22. Ibid., 390.
23. Ibid., 391. See Balthasar's *Einfaltungen*.
24. This is the title of the first volume of Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* (1961).
25. J. Sudbrack, "*Um den Stellenwert...*", op. cit., 392.
26. B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, New York 1972, 107, 1
27. Ibid., 112.
28. Ibid., 115, 117.
29. Ibid., 122f; compare 278, 283.
30. Ibid., 292.
31. W. Kasper (ed.), *Gegenwart des Geistes*, op. cit., 8.
32. Ibid., 8f.
33. Ibid., 9.
34. Ibid., 10.
35. See M. Albus' remark on Balthasar's reception in M. Albus, *Die Wahrheit ist Liebe. Zur Unterscheidung des Christlichen nach Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Freiburg 1976, 18: "Die Tatsache, daß im Bereich der *geistlichen Theologie* keine Rezeption Balthasars stattfindet, hat wohl eher ihren Grund im Fehlen dieser wichtigen Seite der Theologie heute als in Balthasar selbst. Sein Werk ist bestimmt von der *geistlichen Theologie*. Insgesamt wird man wohl sagen dürfen, daß Balthasar selbst auch wenig Ambitionen dafür gehabt hat, zur Theologie als Schultheologie wesentliche Beiträge zu leisten. Das Werk Balthasars ist in seiner Grundbestimmung und kargen Ergiebigkeit für Akademisches oder Allzuakademisches geradezu eine (nicht zu übersehende oder gerade deswegen übersehene) Kritik dieser Art von Theologie."
36. Compare Balthasar's Foreword in Adrienne von

Introduction

- Speyr, *Das Wort und die Mystik I*, Einsiedeln 1970, 10.
37. On the essential unity of Trinity, creation, the Christ event, Church, Christian life see "*Nur wenn*" in *Einfaltungen*, 129-47. Compare H322 443.
 38. A. von Speyr, op. cit., 10. See also A. Auer's article "*Frömmigkeit*" in *LThK IV/1960*, 398-405, especially 403. Here Auer maintains that Christian piety or spirituality does not remain merely a matter of subjective interiority. It is neither a piety of feeling (Schleiermacher) nor of subjective need (modernism). It is essentially grounded in and related to the reality of God and his revelation in the mystery of creation and redemption. From this fundamental salvation-history determination, Auer lists what he considers to be the decisive characteristics of Christian piety. It is (1) theocentric, (2) Christocentric, (3) ecclesial, (4) sacramental, (5) personal, (6) communal, and (7) eschatological. Compare J. Sudbrack, "*Spirituality*", op. cit., 1626f.
 39. Compare the structure of *Das Wort und die Mystik*, op. cit. The first volume treats of the states and particular forms of experience of the mystic. It is entitled "Subjective Mysticism". The second volume treats of the "content" and structure of the revelation which is experienced and the theological implications for the spiritual life. It is called "Objective Mysticism". The present study is to be understood from the second perspective. See also J. Sudbrack, "*Spirituality*", op. cit., 1626: "Christian spirituality ... draws its vitality from the salvific deed of

Introduction

God in Jesus Christ present in the Church and transmitted through its preaching and sacraments. Some of the elementary considerations, then, can be better elaborated in terms of this other pole of the dialectical unity of Christian spirituality, the objective salvific deeds which are live in the faith of the Church, rather than through reflection on the believing man. A glance at the historical development will justify this orientation of spirituality to the content of faith and the object of worship." (Underlining mine).

40. See below, V. DEVELOPMENT OR DEEPENING?, pp. 29f.
41. Just a few examples: K. Rahner, "*Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in *Civitas* 20 (1965), 601-4; H. de Lubac SJ, "*Un témoin du Christ: Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in *Civitas* 20 (1965), 587-600 = "*A Witness of Christ in the Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in *Communio--International Catholic Review* 2/3 (1975), 228-46, with epilogue written in 1975: 246-9. Other articles in the same issue of *Communio*: Leo J. O'Donovan SJ, "*God's Glory in Time*", 250-69; M. Proterra SJ, "*Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theologian*", 270-88. See also W. Kasper (ed.), *Gegenwart des Geistes*, op. cit., 9; H. Vorgrimler, "*Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in H. Vorgrimler/R. Vander Gucht (eds.), *Bilanz der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert IV*, Freiburg 1971, 122-42.
42. In the past few years, there has been renewed effort to translate Balthasar's major works into English. Also helpful will be the new translation of M. Kehl/W. Löser, *In der Fülle des Glaubens. Hans Urs von Balthasar--Lesebuch*,

Introduction

- Basel 1980 by R. Daly SJ/Fred Lawrence:
The von Balthasar Reader, New York 1982.
43. For example, see P. Eicher, *Offenbarung. Prinzip neuzeitlicher Theologie*, München 1977, 294n5.
 44. See M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 13-5.
 45. M. Kehl, *Kirche als Institution. Zur theologischen Begründung des institutionellen Charakters der Kirche in der neueren deutschsprachigen katholischen Ekklesiologie*, Frankfurt 1976, 308.
 46. K. Tossou, *Streben nach Vollendung. Zur Pneumatologie im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Freiburg 1983.
 47. Ibid., 3n1.
 48. Ibid., 4, 5, 62f, 114n3, 524.
 49. Ibid., 382, 483f.
 50. Tossou mentions A. Moda, *Hans Urs von Balthasar. Un' esposizione critica del suo pensiero*, Bari 1976 (a dissertation at the University of Neuchâtel, 1974); G. Marchesi, *La Cristologia di Hans Urs von Balthasar. La figura di Gesù Cristo espressione visibile di Dio*, Rome 1977 (a dissertation at the Gregorian); M. Albus, op. cit.; M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 239-311 (a dissertation at Tübingen accepted in Vienna, 1975). See Tossou, 31-45.
 51. M. Albus, op. cit., 138-45.
 52. Ibid., 159-67.
 53. Ibid., 167-81.
 54. W. Löser, *Im Geiste des Origenes. Hans Urs von Balthasar als Interpret der Theologie der Kirchenväter*, Frankfurt 1976, 247-54.
 55. Ibid., 250.

Introduction

56. Ibid., 251.
57. Ibid., 253.
58. For the best concise summary here, see M. Kehl, "*Hans Urs von Balthasar. Ein Porträt*" in M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 13-60 (English translation, Daly/Lawrence, op. cit., 3-54). Also: M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis. Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg 1981, 28-76; H. Heinz, *Der Gott des Je-mehr. Der christologische Ansatz Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Frankfurt 1975, esp. 41-62; W. Tinnefeldt, *Ekstasis der Liebe und Einfaltung des Glaubens. Eine Untersuchung zur Frage nach der Mitte und Einheit der christlichen Wahrheit bei Hans Urs von Balthasar*, (unpublished dissertation at the University of Mainz 1975), 1-58. For Balthasar on Balthasar: *Rechenschaft 1965*, Einsiedeln 1965 = "*In Retrospect*" in *Communio--International Catholic Review* 2/3 (1975), 197-220 (translated and adapted); M. Albus, "*Geist und Feuer. Ein Gespräch mit Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in *HK* 30 (1976), 72-82.
59. In addition to the dissertations already mentioned above, see P. Eicher, op. cit., 293-342.
60. M. Albus, "*Geist und Feuer*", op. cit., 73.
61. SC 230.
62. BG 70.
63. H1 71.
64. SC 158f.
65. VC 127.
66. See the *Geleitwort* to Tossou, op. cit., vii.
67. Compare M. Lochbrunner, op. cit., 54f.
68. Compare H. Heinz, op. cit., 72f.

Introduction

69. W. Löser, *Im Geiste des Origenes*, op. cit., 11f. See also M. Albus, *Die Wahrheit ist Liebe*, op. cit., 184ff; P. Eicher, *Offenbarung*, op. cit., 324-342; M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis*, op. cit., 57.
70. M. Albus, *Die Wahrheit ist Liebe*, op. cit., 28f, 181.
71. Balthasar himself: H322 15f; also Einfaltungen. Compare M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis*, op. cit., 56.
72. H322 15f.
73. H. Heinz, *Der Gott des Je-mehr*, op. cit., 39; compare 84.
74. M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 42f.
75. Ibid., 25, 43.
76. M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis*, op. cit., 56.
77. Pace Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis*, op. cit., 82.
78. KB i.
79. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Alle Wege führen zum Kreuz" in *IKZ* 4/80, 333.
80. VC 234.
81. VC 227.
82. "Theologie und Heiligkeit": VC 195-225. First published in 1948.
83. VC 195.
84. VC 197.
85. VC 201.
86. VC 208.
87. VC 220.
88. SG 20f.
89. H312 410n2. See the whole section "Metaphysik der Heiligen" 407-91; also VC 202f.
90. M. Albus, "Geist und Feuer", op. cit., 73ff.
91. SC 9.

Introduction

- 92. SC 95ff.
- 93. Einfaltungen 41.
- 94. Ibid., 15-42.
- 95. Ibid., 42.
- 96. EB 11.
- 97. TD4 4
- 98. M. Albus, "*Geist und Feuer*", op. cit., 73.
- 99. Einfaltungen 40.

Chapter One

1. See VC 212f. Correctly noted by M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis. Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg i. Br. 1981, 160. This recently published dissertation is a very good introduction to Balthasar's theology. See also J. Fessio SJ, *The Origin of the Church in Christ's Kenosis. The Ontological Structure of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Dissertation Regensburg 1974, 379n5, who refers to Henri de Lubac on this point.
2. SC 9-10.
3. K 30-31; M. Albus, "Geist und Feuer", *Herder Korrespondenz* 30 (1976), 75.
4. PI 202n1; M. Kehl, *Kirche als Institution. Zur theologischen Begründung des institutionellen Charakters der Kirche in der neueren deutschsprachigen katholischen Ekklesiologie*, Frankfurt 1976, 275n201.
5. TD22 184; TD4 53-57; H1 461. Compare H. Heinz, *Der Gott des Je-mehr. Der christologische Ansatz Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Bern-Frankfurt 1975, 95n16.
6. TD22 136-238, 472f.
7. W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, Mainz 1982, 338; Compare L. Scheffczyk, *Der eine und dreifaltige Gott*, Mainz 1968, 122.
8. Kasper, op. cit., 337.
9. TD22 466.
10. Compare Kasper, op. cit., 338-9.
11. Compare Scheffczyk, op. cit., 9.
12. Kasper, op. cit., 33.
13. See Scheffczyk, op. cit., 10.
14. See H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person*, Münster 1966⁴, 33-40; Kasper, op. cit., 194f, 197f.

Chapter One

15. GNL 92-97; compare Kasper, op. cit., 193-198.
16. For a review of current trinitarian theology (which sadly does not mention Balthasar!), see W. Hill, *The Three-Personed God*, Washington D.C. 1982.
17. Kasper, op. cit., 333. See K. Rahner, *The Trinity*, New York 1974, 22 (trans. of *Der dreifaltige Gott als transzendenter Urgrund der Heilsgeschichte*, *MySal II*, Einsiedeln 1967, 317-401.
18. See esp. TD22 464-467, 472-479; TD3 297-305.
19. TD22 465-6.
20. H1, 449; GNL 58; Compare Heinz, op. cit., 94-107.
21. Compare Scheffczyk, op. cit., 123; Heinz, op. cit., 96.
22. See Kasper, op. cit., 333ff, 367ff; compare Scheffczyk, op. cit., 7-11, 122f; Y. Congar, *Der Heilige Geist*, Freiburg 1982, 331ff.
23. TD22 466; compare Kasper, op. cit., 335.
24. Rahner, op. cit., 24.
25. Compare Kasper, op. cit., 321.
26. SC 274-5.
27. SC 95-6.
28. Images such as the source and river, or sun and beam were already used in trinitarian theology by Tertullian to emphasize the fact that the distinction of persons in the Trinity was in no way to be understood as a division or separation. In this, he followed the Apologists. See Kasper, op. cit., 331 and J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, New York-London 1960², 113f.
29. PI 224, 328.
30. SC 95-6.
31. SC 39-40.
32. PI 224-5. See Congar, op. cit., 92-99, for a brief history of the approach understanding the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son.

Chapter One

33. With the example of the child as the unexpected, new fruit of marital union, Balthasar follows and modifies similar considerations by Richard of St. Victor. Richard approached the mystery of the Trinity from an understanding of love as the highest and most perfect good. Perfect love, however, requires at least two persons of equal dignity. Already the classical philosophical authors held that true friendship could only exist between equals. In the Trinity, these two are the Father and the Son. Richard suggests however, that perfect love is self-forgetful and not self-centered. It is a sign of the perfection of the love between two friends that they each desire that a third can enjoy the love of their beloved. The true lover does not only love the other as himself, but wishes that the beloved love also a third, without fear of any disadvantage. It is a sign of weakness, when in a communion of love, the two lovers cannot bear the company of a third. From these considerations, Richard concludes that perfect love cannot be exclusive to two persons. It requires a third, loved by both the other lovers.

It was from Gregory the Great that Richard learned that true love (*dilectio*) must go out to the other if it is to become Christian *caritas*. It is precisely here, then, that Richard derives his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the third one mutually loved (*condilectum*) in the perfect love between Father and Son. We mention this in the present

Chapter One

context because for Balthasar, who is so strongly influenced by Richard, the analogy of marital union which bears fruit in the child, is perhaps a better example than friendship to illustrate what Richard meant when speaking of the Spirit as *persona condilecta*.

The trouble with Richard's example, says Balthasar, is that applied to God, it seems to deduce necessarily the existence of the third person. Balthasar sees the abandonment of two lovers in marital union as a sign of the utter freedom, the newness, the incalculable dynamism of love. He sees the child as something more than desired and certainly something which is not merely the product of machinations over which the two human beings have full control. While the two lovers can desire a child and decide to make love in order to conceive one, still the birth of a new human person remains for Balthasar an inconceivable, incalculable miracle. In this sense, Balthasar would also stress the utter freedom, newness and unpredictability of the Spirit.

Of course Balthasar is aware of the limitations of such analogies and makes it quite clear that the only real starting point for a doctrine of the Trinity is the very trinitarian structure of God's self-revelation in the economy of salvation. All such analogies are only secondary helps to try to come to a better understanding of the Trinity. See Balthasar's *Geleitwort* to K. Tossou, *Streben nach Vollendung*, Freiburg 1983, viii. Also a similar suggestion

Chapter One

- by Mühlen, op. cit., 116-119.
34. SC 131-2.
 35. SC 96.
 36. PI 224-5. Compare PI 328.
 37. SC 97.
 38. Kasper, apparently following Balthasar, proposes that in the Holy Spirit, God in his innermost reality as love is from all eternity capable of sharing in love "outside" himself. See Kasper, op. cit., 278, 378. Compare W. Kasper, *"Die Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes"* in W. Kasper, G. Sauter, *Kirche--Ort des Geistes*, Freiburg 1976, 34; H. Mühlen, *Morgen wird Einheit sein*, Paderborn 1974, 128. On the relationship between Latin and Greek trinitarian theology in general, see Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, 264-273, 361-365; Congar, op. cit., 321-453, esp. 447-453
 39. SC 97.
 40. This is the central theme of H. Heinz's dissertation, op. cit. note 5 above. See, for example, pp 98-101, 225.
 41. SC 132. Compare GF 282; SC 39-40.
 42. KA 20.
 43. See SC 95-105.
 44. VC 181. Compare W 254; H322 399; TD21 115-6; *Ignatius von Loyola, Die Exerzitien*, Einsiedeln 1979⁶, 95. See also Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, 14-5.
 45. TD1 235; H322 397; PI 224. Compare Heinz, op. cit., 100, 269.
 46. H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person*, op. cit., note 14 above.
 47. Ibid., 59-60.

Chapter One

48. SC 115.
49. SC 116.
50. SC 115-6.
51. Compare PI 35.
52. PI 225.
53. PI 210ff.
54. SC 102.
55. SC 107, 132.
56. BG 122.
57. SC 154-5.
58. K 30.
59. Although Rahner's own approach differs from Balthasar's greatly, his presentation of the history of the dogmatic-terminological problems is helpful. See especially *The Trinity*, op. cit., 103ff. Also the article "*Dreifaltigkeit*" in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche III*, Freiburg 1959², particularly Rahner's contribution, 548-554. H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person*, op. cit., has a very useful section on the three main definitions of person found in scholastic theology: Boethius (Thomas Aquinas), Richard of St. Victor (Duns Scotus) and Alexander of Hales (Bonaventure): See pp. 26-44, "*Die Personbegriffe der Scholastik in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis*". Also to recommend is W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 337-354 and Y. Congar, op. cit., 321-413.
60. See Kasper's analysis of Barth and Rahner, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 350-1.
61. SC 117.
62. Schierse quotes Mühlen, op. cit., 3. In the fourth edition it reads *oppositio relationis* not *oppositio relativa*.

Chapter One

63. SC 117.
64. Ibid., 117. Compare H322 233.
65. PI 420.
66. TD3 299.
67. See Rahner, *The Trinity*, op. cit., 75-6. Compare notes 29 and 30. It is extremely difficult to understand what Rahner means here.
68. See Kasper's critique, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 351ff. Also p. 368: "Deshalb seine radikale Abwehr des neuzeitlichen Personbegriffs in der Trinitätslehre. Wir sagten schon: 'Distinkte Subsistenzweisen' kann man nicht anrufen, anbeten und verherrlichen. Das letztlich namenlose Geheimnis Gottes bei Rahner kann man nur anschweigen." Congar on Rahner: *Der Heilige Geist*, op. cit., 333-6.
69. PI 420.
70. The considerations on infinite and finite freedom in chapter two of this study show further the great difference between Rahner and Balthasar. Rahner's approach seems to lead to modalism (although he himself clearly, explicitly rejects modalism). Balthasar's approach tends toward tri-theism (although he himself explicitly rejects tri-theism and insists upon the nature of the trinitarian persons as pure relations).
71. See Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., on Ratzinger, 354; compare pp. 193-198.
72. Compare TD22 472-479: "*Von der Person Christi zur personalen Trinität*".
73. K 60.
74. SC 132.

Chapter One

75. SC 132.
76. H322 148.
77. K 60.
78. GEL 37
79. TD21 234.
80. TD21 232-3. Compare W 200.
81. PI 327, SC 240. Compare MP 147-8.
82. MP 153.
83. VC 181.
84. SC 475-6.
85. SC 114. Compare TD21 189.
86. Compare Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 375f.
87. See Rahner, *The Trinity*, op. cit., 73ff.
88. See Tossou, op. cit., 343-349.
89. Richard von Sankt-Victor, *Die Dreieinigkeit*
Übertragung und Anmerkungen von Hans Urs von
Balthasar, Einsiedeln 1980. See especially
Book IV (pp. 113-144) and Book V (pp. 148-179),
particularly pp. 124-132. On the relationship
between Thomas, who developed his trinitarian
theology mainly along Augustinian lines, and
Richard, with whom he agrees on many points,
see Mühlen, op. cit., 120, 122-6.
90. See, for example, Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*,
op. cit., 376f; Scheffczyk, op. cit., 119ff; and
of course, Mühlen's *Der Heilige Geist als Person*,
op. cit. note 14.
91. See Tossou, op. cit., viii. PI 202n1; TD22 480-2.
Balthasar is well aware of the strengths and
weaknesses of both approaches. Neither may
be absolutized. They complement each other. If
Balthasar gives a certain pride of place to the
personal-relational approach, it is because this

Chapter One

is such a central human reality. It must be used critically, as any analogy. The Trinity cannot be "constructed" out of a personalistic anthropology.

92. Richard von Sankt-Victor, op. cit., 18. Compare Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 266, 277f. J. Ratzinger, "*Der Heilige Geist als Communio. Zum Verhältnis von Pneumatologie und Spiritualität bei Augustinus*" in C. Heitmann/H. Mühlen (Hrsg.), *Erfahrung und Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, München 1974, 223-238. F. Mayr, "*Die Einseitigkeit der traditionellen Gotteslehre. Zum Verhältnis von Anthropologie und Pneumatologie*" in C. Heitmann/H. Mühlen, op. cit., 242.
93. Richard von Sankt-Victor, op. cit., 18n17.
94. Ibid., 19.
95. Ibid., 20. One wonders if the same must not be said of Balthasar!
96. Tossou, op. cit., viii.
97. For example, Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, 277f.
98. Richard von Sankt-Victor, op. cit., 19.
99. TD3 300.
100. TD21 234.
101. See especially MP 143-154: "*Die Kenose und das neue Gottesbild*", particularly pp. 147-8. This is made clear from the point of view of Balthasar's christology in Heint, op. cit., 167-288: "*Jesus Christus--Mitte der Offenbarungsgestalt*".
102. See MP 143-7.
103. MP 151-2.
104. For the differences between Bulgakow and Balthasar see MP 152-3.
105. *Selbsthingabe*: TD3 301; *Selbstenteignung*: TD3 308.
106. TD3 301

Chapter One

107. TD3 300-1.
108. TD3 301.
109. *Hingabebewegung*: TD3 301; *Selbsthingabe*: TD3 303.
110. PI 114.
111. H322 198.
112. Compare PI 55.
113. TD3 301.
114. PI 115.
115. TD3 301.
116. TD3, 308.
117. PI 115.
118. See H322 10, 226-244. Compare TD21 233; MP 147f.
One also sees the unmistakable influence of the
Greek Fathers.
119. TD21 262.
120. TD21 234. Compare GF 91.
121. TD21 233.
122. TD21 234.
123. One cannot help seeing a certain tendency
toward tri-theism in some of Balthasar's
formulations. Admittedly, it is very difficult
to talk about the Trinity at all. The long
history of terminological problems is not
over! Despite Balthasar's use of traditional
scholastic terms, and despite his insistence
upon the self-less, kenotic nature of the
trinitarian personal relations, I cannot help
seeing a certain tendency toward tri-theism.
I have already alluded to this in reference
to Richard of St. Victor in the previous section.
Here, the notion of three proper realms of
freedom--one for each of the persons--can
very easily be interpreted in a tri-theistic
fashion. Balthasar goes so far in one place

Chapter One

as to speak of petitionary prayer in the Trinity (TD21 233-4). Since each of the divine persons have the same sovereign freedom, and since no one can predict how they will use their freedom, Balthasar says that one can speak of a mutual bidding or petitioning in the Trinity. For Balthasar, this is the basis for the confidence of the christian in prayer. Balthasar is strongly influenced here by Adrienne von Speyr. Although it is clear that Balthasar would defend himself against a tri-theistic interpretation of such statements, it is clear that there are serious conceptual, terminological problems. We shall return to this later when we treat of Jesus' prayer, and of petitionary prayer in the life of the Christian.

124. TD21 233.

125. TD21 238.

126. MP 147; TD21 233.

127. PI 329. Compare KA 27.

128. TD3 308; H322 198.

129. TD21 242; PI 108.

130. PI 9

131. See M. Albus, *Die Wahrheit ist Liebe. Zur Unterscheidung des Christlichen nach Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Freiburg 1976, 28-35; Albus, *Geist und Feuer*, op. cit., 75; Heinz, op. cit., 72; Lochbrunner, op. cit., 54-59, 66-76.

132. SC 116-7.

133. *"die personifizierte Freiheit in Gott"*: PI 36. Compare BG 169. *"personhaftes Wir jenseits des Ich-Du von Vater und Sohn...in göttlich*

Chapter One

- souveräner Freiheit*": SC 115.
134. See PI 57.
135. SC 132: *"Er ist das ihrer Liebe Zukommende, Zufallende, das Je-mehr dessen, was im reinen Ineinandersein erhoffbar schien, das Je-Neuer, Je-Jünger, Je-Fruchtbarer Gottes."*
136. SC 96-7. Compare PI 330.
137. SC 116.
138. SC 116.
139. PI 57.
140. PI 57: *"Die Form des Wirkens des göttlichen Geistes weist auf dessen eigenes göttliches Wesen zurück, kraft dessen er sowohl Gottes letzte Freiheit wie seine letzte Bestimmtheit ist."*
141. SC 101-2.
142. *"Resultat"*: PI 144; *"Ergebnis"*: PI 144; *"Fazit"*: PI 330; *"objektivierte Liebe"*: PI 97.
143. BG 169.
144. H322 293.
145. *"das völlig Entschränkte in Gott"*: PI 35; *"die letzte Öffnung Gottes in sein eigenes, vollkommenes Außen"*: SC 97.
146. PI 226.

1. TD21 233.
2. TD21 233-5.
3. TD3 303.
4. TD3 304.
5. See above, p. 74. Compare TD21 240ff; MP 153; TD3 300ff. Also TD21 238, where Balthasar qualifies such expressions.
6. TD3 305.
7. TD21 170-305.
8. Lochbrunner, op. cit., 214-24, gives a good, short summary of the material in TD21.
9. TD21 186; compare TD21 177-86. See TD22 16: "Erinnert sei vorweg daran, daß wir um die geheimnisvolle, jede theologische Dramatik allererst ermöglichende Gegenüberstellung absoluter und endlicher Freiheit nur durch die Bibel wissen, und um die vollendete Gestalt eines Inseins der endlichen in der absoluten Freiheit nur durch das Neue Testament..."
10. TD21 170-1.
11. TD21 177: *"in ihrem dramatischen Mit- (Für- oder Gegen-)Einander"*.
12. TD21 177n4; KB 392. With this postulate of the interrelatedness or togetherness of finite and infinite freedom, Balthasar stands squarely in the tradition of High Scholasticism. The relative autonomy of the world, and in particular, of individual finite freedom is grounded theonomously. Balthasar explicitly rejects the separation of human and divine freedom as it began to occur after Descartes and the ensuing subjectivity of modern thought since the Enlightenment. For a good, concise description of this development, see Kasper,

Chapter Two/I

Der Gott Jesu Christi, op. cit., 29-67, with bibliographical references, especially p. 32n11. Further, W. Kasper, "*Theonomie und Autonomie. Zur Ortsbestimmung des Christentums in der modernen Welt*" in *Anspruch der Wirklichkeit und christlicher Glaube. Probleme und Wege theologischer Ethik heute* (FS Alfons Auer), H. Weber-D. Mieth (eds.), Düsseldorf 1980, 17-41.

13. TD21 186.
14. TD21 188.
15. TD21 188-9.
16. TD21 190.
17. Also *Freiheit als Selbstbestimmung, Aus-sich-sein-Können*: see TD21 192-3.
18. Also *Freiheit als Zustimmung, Wählen-müssen*: See TD21 206, 214.
19. TD3 136.
20. TD21 206.
21. TD21 186.
22. TD21 192.
23. TD21 206: "*eine unendliche Endlichkeit*".
24. TD21 289-305.
25. TD21 206-7.
26. TD21 216.
27. TD21 216-7.
28. TD21 217.
29. TD21 217-8.
30. TD21 218.
31. TD21 219.
32. TD21 220.
33. TD21 227.
34. TD21 229.
35. TD21 230-1.
36. See above, pp. 72ff.

Chapter Two/I

37. TD21 232.
38. TD3 303.
39. See above, pp. 78f.
40. TD21 234.
41. TD21 236-7.
42. TD21 240n27.
43. TD3 291.
44. TD3 308.
45. See Lochbrunner, op. cit., 220.
46. TD21 236. See also TD3 299ff. For an excellent and detailed discussion and criticism of the problem of God's relation to the world, especially as reflected in the trinitarian theology of J. Moltmann and as developed in the process theology of S. Ogden, see John J. O'Donnell, SJ, *Trinity and Temporality. The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope*, Oxford 1983, especially pp. 86-95, 124-128, 130-136, 190-200.
47. TD21 237.
48. TD21 237.
49. TD21 241-2; compare KB 297.
50. TD21 242.
51. TD21 237.
52. TD21 242.
53. TD21 246.
54. TG 53f.
55. TD3 443; H2 241-2, referring to Anselm.
56. TD3 444.
57. We must mention if only briefly, the discussion of analogy between Balthasar and Barth. Balthasar's famous Barth book, published in 1951, and now

Chapter Two/I

in its fourth edition, marked a profound breakthrough in the controversy between Catholic and Protestant theologians on the question of analogy. John Macken, SJ touches on this in his dissertation, *The Autonomy Theme in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics and in Current Barth Criticism*, Tübingen, 1984 and has kindly made his work available to me for use in the following remarks. E. Przywara, who had a great influence on Balthasar, had suggested in the early 1920s, that the key problem was in Barth's notion of God. In adopting the Lutheran principle of the Alleinwirksamkeit Gottes (as opposed to the Allwirksamkeit Gottes) Barth came to the position of pure negation of the created world of finite freedom (nature) as opposed to the Catholic position based on the principle of analogy between God (and grace) and the finite creation. Basically the problem was the relationship between nature and grace. Barth's position seemed to be a radical "either-or" between God and man, grace and nature. The Catholic insistence upon an analogical "and" expressed the conviction that the finite creature has a real (if relative) freedom and independence before (and in!) God; grace presupposes nature.

Barth was especially influenced by E. Peterson to abandon a purely dialectical approach. While continuing to reject the notion of *analogia entis* (which he considered an hybristic attempt to bring God and his utterly sovereign revelation

Chapter Two/I

under some all-encompassing, philosophical concept), he suggested an alternative: *analogia fidei*. Radicalizing a basically Augustinian understanding of human freedom, Barth emphasized that finite freedom is opened up by and utterly dependent upon divine freedom. Thus freedom is not some neutral aspect or characteristic of being but existence in the mysterious trinitarian realm opened up by grace, where "autonomy" and obedience, independence and discipleship mutually condition and determine each other. This "turn to analogy" (KB 93-123) signaled a new, positive (if also "constrictively Christological") understanding of the created, "natural" order.

G. Söhnngen set about from the Catholic side to explore the meaning of Barth's *analogia fidei* in the Catholic tradition, and so, to contribute to a growing understanding and consensus between Barth and Catholic theology. He showed how Barth's stress on the new existence of man due to grace necessarily implied a new, ontological reality in man that must somehow be expressed in terms of being. *Analogia fidei* necessarily includes *analogia entis*, though not the same metaphysical, abstract *analogia entis* of philosophy. Barth himself agreed with Söhnngen's analysis and was puzzled that it presented a Catholic position.

It was 16 years later that Hans Urs von Balthasar

finally established Söhngen's perspective as the basis for future Catholic interpretation of Barth. Balthasar was able to present a representative Catholic theology which manifested an explicitly Christological, salvation-history oriented understanding of analogy. The absolute priority of grace as the goal of nature is revealed in the Christ event. At the same time the created world is in God's eternal plan the presupposition for grace. Balthasar was able to show that the way Barth understood God's revelation in creation from a Christological point of view contained *analogia entis* as *analogia fidei*. He also showed that the way certain Catholic theologians (among others: Przywara, Guardini, Schmaus) had adopted a Christocentric principle in their understanding of the divine plan of creation enabled them to agree that the *analogia entis* comes to concrete expression only within the all-encompassing *analogia fidei* (KB 390).

On the other hand, Balthasar could point to a number of texts of Barth to show Barth's acceptability to Scholastic theologians and asked what more one could possibly demand of Barth: "Heil, Erfüllung, vollkommenes Sein heie--und das ist es, was das geschaffene Sein nicht in sich selber hat--ein Sein in der *Teilnahme* am Sein *Gottes*, von dem es her, zu dem hin es ist.... Dieses Zukommen des Heils ist...die *Gnade* Gottes...Gott schenkt ihm ((dem Geschöpf)), was ihm nur *geschenkt*

Chapter Two/I

und nur von *ihm* geschenkt werden kann. Und er schenkt es ihm *wirklich*..."(KB iii).

Balthasar has remained critical of a tendency in Barth's theology to overemphasize the gracious sovereignty of God and to underemphasize the importance and relative autonomy of human freedom and the created order. Balthasar criticized what he called a "Christological constriction" in Barth's theology. By this he meant that the philosophical presuppositions and implications present in Barth's position were not reflected upon. Such a reflection would enable the similarity to a properly understood "Catholic" notion of analogy, and the relationship between philosophy and theology, to appear. In the end, however, the incredible kinship to Barth is unmistakable and Balthasar himself could write: "Auch die Gegenstellung von analogia entis und analogia fidei hat hier keinen Sinn mehr, es sei denn, man reserviere den letzteren Begriff für das (vorhin beschriebene personale) Ergriffenwerden des Menschen vom sich-offenbarenden Gott her, im Gegensatz zu der im menschlichen Akt der Selbstreflexion aufleuchtenden Einsicht, daß die 'Welt' nicht 'Gott' ist, sondern-- wie leer und negativ auch immer--auf ein Anderes, Unfaßbares als principium et finis verweist" (KB iv). Compare Löser, op. cit., 29-40. Also H. Bouillard, *Karl Barth, II*, Paris 1957, 215-7; P. Rosato, *The Spirit as Lord. The Pneumatology of Karl Barth*, Edinburgh 1981, 144.

Chapter Two/I

58. TD21 246.
59. TD3 136.
60. TD21 234; TD3 305.
61. TD3 303.
62. TD3 354.
63. Denzinger-Schönmetzer³⁵ 806.
64. TD3 149.
65. TD3 303.
66. TD3 300f.
67. Compare TD21 246f, 284f.
68. TD21 286.
69. The meaning of the term "autonomy" has a long history since Descartes. It has no one meaning in the current discussion. It is beyond the scope of this study to enter into this discussion. See R. Pohlmann, "*Autonomie*" in *HWPB*, Basel 1971ff; W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 18-21, 29-67, esp. 32ff, 41ff; J. Macken, op. cit., (dissertation in preparation, Tübingen 1984), Section Two: *The History of the Term "Autonomy"*.
70. TD21 264. In addition to TD21 264-7, 284f noted above, see also TD3 136, 149, 162; CS 325f. Balthasar also speaks of the two poles of finite freedom as autonomy and theonomy: TD21 208f. For a good overview of the treatment of the analogy of freedom in terms of the patristic concepts of *imago Dei* and *similitudo Dei*, see Balthasar's excursus, "*Bild und Gleichnis Gottes*": TD21 289-305.
71. TD21 248.
72. TD21 248ff.
73. TD21 249f.
74. See above, pp. 95f.

Chapter Two/I

75. TD3 345.
76. TD3 305-6.
77. TD21 275-88; TD3 342-62, especially pp. 355-7.
78. TD3 342; TD21 208-9; H1 189; SC 142. In this regard, one sees how important a role Anselm plays in Balthasar's notion of freedom. See H2 241-57.
79. TD21 257.
80. TD21 275-84, 287. Compare TD22 210-11 where the analogical character of this rebirth is stressed.
81. KB 373f.
82. TD22 419-21.
83. Balthasar follows de Lubac here when he emphasizes that creation has, as a matter of fact, only one, supernatural destiny. From all eternity, God freely and graciously wills one thing and one thing only: to open himself up in love to the world. Balthasar, like de Lubac, begins from the concrete creation in which God has already revealed himself as the destiny of the world. Balthasar wishes to emphasize that the fact that the world is already created with a supernatural destiny does not in the least diminish the utterly free and gracious character of its goal. Grace remains a gift and utterly unowed, even where God has irrevocably "decided" to grant it--even when God "decides" to create a world, which can only find its fulfillment in God's grace. In other words, the utter gratuity of God's grace is an inner, essential characteristic of grace itself, and not merely an "extrinsic" property in comparison to the realm of "nature". In this sense, Balthasar agrees with Rahner

Chapter Two/I

that the concept of "pure nature", at least as a "*Restbegriff*", is absolutely essential in theology. It brings out the nature of the creature in its own being different from God, in its own subjectivity and relative opposition to God, precisely as the one who is created by God as capable of receiving and responding to the supernatural, divine revelation. Here, of course, is where Balthasar found fault with Barth. Moreover, the notion of "nature" is necessary in theology in order to bring out the utter gratuity of grace. It protects against the confusion of the gratuity of general creaturely existence and the ("double" or "second") gratuity of grace. Here is where one can see Balthasar's closeness to Barth. See H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Der Begriff der Natur in der Theologie*" in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 75 (1953), 452-61, especially pp. 453ff. In his book on Barth, Balthasar shows a certain amount of skepsis as to the real gain in understanding the mystery of grace better by the use of such a concept. Of course there, he is trying to show that the Catholic position is not so opposed to Barth's as one might suspect, whereas in his discussions with Catholic theologians (for example, with E. Gutwenger, SJ in the above mentioned article), he would be more likely to acknowledge its importance. In the Barth book he writes, for example, that he doubts that such a distinction helps further than the biblical distinction between creation and

covenant, or the patristic distinction between creaturely *imago* and graced *similitudo* (KB 308-11) What in any case must be stressed is the absolute non-derivability of the supernatural from the natural. The trinitarian love as the fulfillment of man is utterly free and "ungeschuldet".

As Balthasar puts it so well: the theoretical question, whether God could have created a world with a merely "natural" destiny is of little importance to God, who in fact freely created the world in order to surrender himself freely in love to it. And what is of little importance to God should also be of little importance to us (KB 312). Compare K. Rahner, "*Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace*," in *Theological Investigations I*, New York 1961, 297-317, especially 297n1, 311n1f.

84. Some of the terms: *Teilnahme* (TD21 208-9, 247-8; PI 350; H1 189; H2 242); *Teilhabe*, *Durchwalten* (TD21 288); *Anteil an der Analogie der Freiheit Christi* (TD3 444).
85. Compare TD21 106: "Die Möglichkeit einer Differenz zwischen Gott--der 'Alles ist' (Sir 43, 27) und deshalb keines Dinges bedürftig--und einer Welt von endlichen und gottbedürftigen Wesen bleibt das alles Nachfolgende fundierende, aber aus nichts deduzierbare Mysterium, zu dem es keine 'größere' Alternative gibt. Erhellte kann es nur werden aus der unendlichen Freiheit Gottes, der sich *in* der Existenz (nicht

Chapter Two/I

notwendig *durch* die Existenz) von Nichtgöttlichem als der uneinholbar Je-Größere erweist."

86. It is clear that to explicate this, one would have to discuss the Christological doctrine of the two wills in Christ, which is beyond the scope of this study. Unfortunately, Balthasar himself does not discuss the history of this theological problem in detail. Important, however, to mention in this respect is Maximus Confessor. See H. U. v. Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie*, Einsiedeln 1961², especially 204-73. Also, Löser, op. cit., especially 192-201.
87. Here one can note the strong similarity to Augustine, Anselm, and in modern times, to K. Barth (compare n. 57 above). W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 66f, 86f, also notes the similarity and differences between Balthasar and Barth. Kasper also calls for an approach in which human autonomy is grounded in God's absolute freedom; God's theonomy may not be conceived in an heteronomous way. The answer to the challenge of contemporary atheism in light of human autonomy, according to Kasper: greater union with God means the greater and ever more fulfilled freedom of man (p. 66). Compare KB 248; TD22 33.
88. See TD21 182; TD22 12.

1. TD21 367.
2. TD22 18f, 30-6.
3. See M. Kehl, *In der Fülle des Glaubens. Hans Urs von Balthasar--Lesebuch*, Freiburg 1980, 33-8; A. Schilson/W. Kasper, *Christologie im Präsens, Kritische Sichtung neuer Entwürfe*, Freiburg ²1977, 63-70. Dissertations: P. Escobar, *Zeit und Sein Jesu Christi bei Hans Urs von Balthasar. Umriss einer Christologie*, Institut Catholique de Paris 1973; H. Heinz, *Der Gott des Je-mehr. Der christologische Ansatz Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Bern/Frankfurt 1975, esp. 289ff; G. Marchesi, *La Cristologia di Hans Urs von Balthasar. La Figura di Gesù Cristo Espressione Visibile di Dio*, Rome, Università Gregoriana Editrice 1977. See also the excellent bibliography in M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis. Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Freiburg 1981.
4. A. Schilson has given a very good overview of the current Christological discussion in *Christologie im Präsens*, op. cit., which I follow here. Helpful too, is "Das Methodenproblem" in TD22 53-135.
5. TD22 53f.
6. See Schilson, op. cit., 37f.
7. Schilson, op. cit., 48f; TD22 72f, 156f.
8. K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations I*, New York 1961, 164n1. See Schilson, op. cit., 88f; Kasper, *Jesus der Christus*, Mainz ⁵1976, 58f.
9. Kasper, *Jesus der Christus*, op. cit., 60f.
10. Schilson, op. cit., 37.
11. Schilson, op. cit., 64f.
12. TD22 136-238.

Chapter Two/II

13. TD22 136f. Compare W. Kasper, "*Neuansätze gegenwärtiger Christologie*" in W. Kasper (ed.), *Christologische Schwerpunkte*, Düsseldorf 1980, 17-36, esp. 28.
14. Balthasar's entire theology, especially his approach to Christology from the notion of mission, is very Johannine and Pauline. But despite the great diversity of the New Testament witness, Balthasar finds decisive unity precisely on the point of Jesus' consciousness of his unique, eschatological and universal mission, and so, of his unique relationship with the Father who sent him. See H1 452-4; TD22 138-41, 149f, 152, 472. Compare TD22 99-106.
15. TD22 149.
16. For these three terms see H322 105-49.
17. TD22 139f.
18. TD22 105f, 146f, 152.
19. See TD22 137, 158f, 184, 190. Quoting W. Kasper: TD22 151. Also KA 31; CS 60, 148-51; GNL 57.
20. TD22 159.
21. TD22 148, 206; H1 460f, 605f.
22. TD22 184, following Thomas *STh I* 43, 1.
23. Schilsøn, op. cit., 63, 66f, 70.
24. Following S. Bulgakow, Balthasar holds that the Incarnation is already included in the kenosis of the creation. "Daß Christus die Sünde der Welt tragen wird, ist die Grundvoraussetzung für die Möglichkeit einer Schöpfung und deren Rechtfertigung." TD3 291.
25. SC 107; compare TD22 168.
26. SC 107.
27. Not all exegetes would see in this text the developed trinitarian-Christological theology

- which forms the heart of Balthasar's interpretation. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to enter into an analysis and criticism of Balthasar's use of scripture. It is a necessary task and would prove very fruitful.
28. SC 108. But note MP 277: "Die entscheidende Offenbarung des Trinitätsgeheimnisses erfolgt somit nicht vor dem Mysterium Paschale." Also footnote Nr. 88: "Die Vordatierung der Trinitätsoffenbarung in Lk 1, 28.31.35 weist auf eine nachösterliche Komposition."
 29. See TD3 303.
 30. CS 148.
 31. See TD22 475; CS 59.
 32. SC 108.
 33. See SC 38-60, "*Die christliche Gestalt*".
 34. SC 109.
 35. See PI 139; MP 138-58; H322 196. Compare W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 235f.
 36. See H322 196-211.
 37. See H322 278; CS 152; H1 443f. Also Schilson, op. cit., 67.
 38. See PI 423; TD22 221; TD3 325.
 39. TD3 311.
 40. See SC 110f; TD3 311; compare SC 331.
 41. SC 59.
 42. On the nature of this identification, which cannot mean agreement with the actual rejection of God by humanity, see TD3 312f, 325.
 43. SC 331.
 44. TD22 171.
 45. CS 150f.
 46. TD22 171.

Chapter Two/II

47. CS 208f.
48. SC 109.
49. For this expression see TD22 174. Compare TD22 167-75; TD3 311f; PI 224ff; CS 151ff.
50. PI 224.
51. SC 108f.
52. TD22 175.
53. H322 228.
54. NK 131; GEL 84; TD1 605
55. PI 57f. Compare CS 151.
56. TD2 477. Compare TD22 175; COR 28.
57. TD22 477.
58. Compare BG 165f; NK 144; H322 86.
59. See TD22 181f.
60. See TD1 247-83; TD22 486-9; TG 31. Also the example of biography: TG 41f. Important here is Balthasar's concept of person and role: TD1 453-603. On the relationship between "person" and "mission": in Christ, TD22 136-238; in Christians, TD22 241-259.
61. TD1 261.
62. See TG 30f.
63. VC 33.
64. TD3 443.
65. For the important concept of *Hinterlegung* see TD22 209; CA 53; PI 131.
66. See above, p.
67. PI 137; TD3 311.
68. See TD22 474. Balthasar stresses the unique activity of the Holy Spirit and the corresponding obedience of the Incarnate Son. According to Balthasar, it is only because of the "trinitarian inversion" that Jesus' true obedience is possible as the Incarnate Son. As we have often

pointed out, Balthasar places great emphasis on the fact that in the Incarnation, the eternal Son is already obedient. The obedience of Jesus in his mission-existence is grounded in and is the economic expression of the obedience of the eternal Son (as Son) to the Father. We saw that Balthasar speaks of the inner-trinitarian relationship of the Son to the Father as "obedience" in the sense that the Son is nothing but the expression of the Father's self-surrender and wishes to be nothing but the expression of the Father. This inner-trinitarian existence of the Son solely "from" and "for" the Father is a kind of obedience. Balthasar hopes to avoid a merely functional understanding of Jesus' obedience and at the same time make it clearer why precisely the Son is the trinitarian person who becomes man. In this respect, it is hard to understand Balthasar's criticism of W. Kasper (see TD22 170f). Kasper admittedly does not explicitly examine the precise nature of the Spirit's role in the obedient mission-existence of Jesus. But it is clear that the obedience of Jesus is possible and actual "in the Holy Spirit" (See W. Kasper, *Jesus der Christus*, op. cit., 299) Moreover, it is clear that Kasper's is not a merely functional understanding of Jesus' obedience. The obedience of Jesus is the existential form of his essential divinity as Son (p. 195). Jesus is the incarnate love of the Father and the incarnate obedience of the Son (p. 274), and not simply an "instrument" for the historical obedience of the Son (compare Balthasar, TD22 170). Kasper stresses the unity of "mission" Christology and "essential" (*Wesens-*) Christology (p. 195).

Chapter Two/II

69. MP 186f.
70. TD22 209; TD3 302, 310.
71. TD22 209.
72. See TD3 232 where Balthasar refers to Maximus Confessor.
73. CS 151f.
74. PI 138.
75. TD22 478f.
76. TD22 146f.
77. TD22 147; TD3 212-20, esp. 215, 217; MP 187f; TG 28f.
78. TD22 157f.
79. TD22 208f. For Balthasar, the key to this unity is precisely the mission "as measure of the knowledge and freedom of Jesus" (TD22 175ff) and so the Spirit who is the former of the mission (TD22 179). Compare Balthasar's remarks on the discussion between H. Riedlinger and K. Rahner (p. 158).
80. See TD22 468; TD3 216.
81. See Chapter One, part I.
82. TD22 179.
83. See TD22 167; TG 23-39; H322 175; GR 12, 38.
84. Compare SC 287; TG 30f. Balthasar would also question the idea that the trinitarian "plan" could exist in all its detail--at least in the non-dramatic way this is often popularly conceived.
85. SV 45-79.
86. SV 49.
87. SV 51.
88. SV 54.
89. SV 60.
90. SV 65.

Chapter Two/II

91. SV 78.
92. TD22 156f. Thus Balathasar dissociates his position from various Jewish understandings of Jesus as well as G. Ebeling's understanding of Jesus as the model for our faith.
93. TD22 155.
94. TD22 468.
95. See TD22 478.
96. CS 63.
97. TD21 252.
98. TD21 252.
99. TD21 255.
100. See H1 461; GNL 66f. Also Schilson, op. cit., 70.
101. GNL 57.
102. CS 27.
103. Especially according to *Luke*: 2,49; 4,43; 9,22; 17,25; 19,5; 22,7; 22,37; 24,44.
104. CS 26.
105. See CS 59f.
106. H322 230.
107. CS 61f; SC 239.
108. CS 61.
109. MP 185: "*Gang zum Kreuz*".
110. MP 186.
111. TD3 324.
112. TD3 310.
113. MP 196f; compare TG 52.
114. MP 198.
115. MP 198; H322 209.
116. H322 207; compare K 54.
117. H322 206f; MP 200.
118. MP 202.
119. MP 211; compare TD3 315ff.
120. TD3 313.

Chapter Two/II

121. MP 208-12.
122. TD3 325.
123. MP 213.
124. MP 213f; PI 265; TD3 331f.
125. MP 211.
126. PI 264.
127. TD3 331f.
128. Unfortunately, Balthasar does not discuss the problem of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit of Jesus in a detailed way: just such a treatment is necessary.
129. SC 110.
130. SC 111.
131. See SC 111f. Compare H322 483f: "Vielmehr 'tritt' der Geist 'für uns ein mit wortlosen Seufzern': so sehr hat sich Gott die Schmerzen seiner Schöpfung zu seinen eigenen gemacht... Das Stöhnen des Geistes ist kein Schein, sowenig das Kreuz und der Schrei des Sohnes ein Schein war... Im seufzenden und darin wahrhaft betenden Geist ist der letzte Schatten eines 'Herrengottes' verschwunden..."
132. SC 112f.
133. SC 112.
134. For example, COR 39; SC 146.
135. See Heinz, op. cit., 83f, 181f.
136. H322 187.
137. On the meaning of the term "hell" as a specifically Christological reality in relationship to "Scheol" (as an Old Testament reality) see MP 237-49, esp. 241, 243, 245f; H322 215.
138. PI 398.

Chapter Two/II

139. PI 396f.
140. MP 227-9. Compare PI 392f, where he mentions a third theme, the triumphant subjection of Satan's realm, only to distance himself from it.
141. MP 228-30. Balthasar speaks of an "over-interpretation" of the biblical witness (p. 230), which in its earliest traditions also speaks of the resurrection and the ascent to heaven in passive terms with relation to the Son: the Father is the one who is "active". Balthasar has difficulties, of course with the interpretation of *1 Peter 3, 18-20; 4, 6*. See MP 234-6.
142. MP 248; H322 213.
143. MP 237.
144. MP 240.
145. PI 394.
146. MP 241.
147. MP 243.
148. H322 215.
149. MP 247.
150. MP 246.
151. H322 212.
152. MP 248.
153. TD3 296f.
154. GF 236.
155. PI 33. See the quote from Barth, H322 199.
156. PI 407f.
157. TD3 326.
158. K 53-5.
159. PI 408f.
160. MP 256, 267f.
161. H322 337f.
162. MP 277f.

Chapter Two/II

163. H322 232; DK 71-5.
164. MP 270; H322 236.
165. Compare 1 *Tim* 3, 16.
166. MP 272.
167. MP 273.
168. TD22 209.
169. MP 273.
170. MP 274.
171. MP 274f.
172. GF 310. In so doing, he adopts the perspective
Of John and Paul.
173. TG 70.
174. H322 278f. Still, this should not obscure the
real drama and "discontinuity" between the two
orders.
175. MP 211.
176. Compare GEL 42f.
177. See Heinz, op. cit., 205, 197.
178. H322 336.
179. MP 276.
180. H322 377.
181. H322 337-9.
182. H322 336.
183. H1 580; GF 139f.
184. Compare H1 507.
185. MP 281.
186. Compare H1 508f.
187. H322 364f.
188. TD3 358f.
189. H322 375f.
190. H1 579.
191. H322 363.
192. MP 277.
193. See above, p. 199.

Chapter Two/II

194. On the exegetical and theological problem of the separation of the resurrection and ascension by the period of forty days, see MP 302-4.
195. TG 63. Compare TG 63-70 and GF 309-314, 139.
196. TG 64.
197. TG 65.
198. TG 67.
199. TG 67f; compare GF 310.
200. GF 310.
201. TD22 471.
202. GF 315.
203. GF 320.
204. TD3 339f.
205. See BG 61.
206. GF 139f.
207. H1 394.
208. H322 364; compare TD22 110.
209. MP 220; H322 214.
210. See Heinz, *op. cit.*, 222-30 on the relationship between cross and resurrection in Balthasar's terminology.
211. H322 201f.

Chapter Three/I

1. SC 306.
2. H322 416f.
3. The dissertation of K. K. J. Tossou investigates the pneumatology of Balthasar with a special emphasis upon the Spirit as God's eschatological power for the fulfillment of history: *Streben nach Vollendung. Eine Studie zur Pneumatologie im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg, 1983. Our treatment can be correspondingly brief.
4. J. Peter Schineller, *Christ and Church: A Spectrum of Views in TS 37 (1976)*, 545-66.
5. Schineller, op. cit., 549.
6. Schineller, op. cit., 552.
7. Schineller, op. cit., 554f. The text which Schineller quotes from Kasper does point out the "representative" and kerygmatic nature of the Church. However, it seems to be a rather blatant misunderstanding of Kasper's understanding of the Church to call it (in Schineller's terms) "non-constitutive" For Kasper, the Church is the necessary and constitutive mediation of the reality of the Christ event precisely as sacrament of the Spirit: compare W. Kasper/G. Sauter, *Kirche--Ort des Geistes*, Freiburg 1976, 35ff; W. Kasper, *Jesus der Christus*, Mainz ⁵1976, 319-22; W. Kasper (ed.), *Absolutheit des Christentums*, Freiburg 1977, 9.
8. Schineller, op. cit., 557f.
9. Schineller, op. cit., 559f.
10. M. Kehl, *Kirche als Institution. Zur theologischen Begründung des institutionellen Charakters der Kirche in der neueren deutschsprachigen katholischen Ekklesiologie*, Frankfurt ²1978.

11. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 127.
12. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 137.
13. Compare A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York 1974, 72ff.
14. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 128.
15. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 144f.
16. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 145, 148.
17. Y. Congar, "*Die Kirche*" von Hans Küng in H. Häring/J. Nolte (eds.), *Diskussion um Hans Küng "Die Kirche"*, Freiburg 1971, 163.
18. H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Hans Küngs 'Kirche'*" in *Civitas* 23 (1968), 453.
19. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 149n140.
20. Compare Dulles, *Models*, op. cit., 33ff.
21. H. U. v. Balthasar, *Civitas*, op. cit., 452.
22. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 312f.
23. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 190.
24. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 191f.
25. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 192.
26. See W. Kasper, "*Christologie von unten? Kritik und Neuansatz gegenwärtiger Christologie*" in L. Scheffczyk (ed.), *Grundfragen der Christologie heute*, Freiburg 1975, 158.
27. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 194.
28. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 221.
29. H. Mühlen, *UNA MYSTICA PERSONA. Die Kirche als das Mysterium der heilsgeschichtlichen Identität des Heiligen Geistes in Christus und den Christen: Eine Person in vielen Personen*, München ³1968.
30. H. Mühlen, *Kirche*, op. cit., 199. Also H. Mühlen, *Der Heilige Geist als Person*, Münster ⁴1966, 190-7.
31. H. Mühlen, *Heiliger Geist*, op. cit., 3f.

Chapter Three/I

32. See H. Mühlen, *Kirche*, op. cit., 13, 17, 176 with references. Mühlen points out the important recent background of this notion in the Tübingen theological tradition. He admits that Möhler himself knew the limits to such an expression, and certainly distinguished between the Church and the Incarnation of the eternal Word as such. However, Mühlen finds the notion too much open to misunderstanding: it tends to identify Christ and the Church.
33. H. Mühlen, *Kirche*, op. cit., 20.
34. Compare Dulles, *Models*, op. cit., 52.
35. TD22 318f.
36. SV 189. See Mühlen's response, *Kirche*, op. cit., 446ff.
37. See TD22 320f. Mühlen's stress on the difference between the Incarnation and Anointing with respect to Jesus and the Incarnation and the Church (§7-9) seems to me to be more a question of a difference in terminology than content. Neither Mühlen nor Balthasar would identify the Church with Christ. Neither would separate her as a mere "other" opposed to Christ. Both find the specific union-in-difference between Christ and the Church to be the specific work of the Holy Spirit. Mühlen approaches this from Jesus' anointing (messianic mission); Balthasar more from the relationship between the Spirit and Mary in the context of the Incarnation.
38. M. Kehl, "*Hans Urs von Balthasar. Ein Porträt*" in M. Kehl/W. Löser (eds.), *In der Fülle des Glaubens. Hans Urs von Balthasar--Lesebuch*, Freiburg 1980, 39.

39. M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 42f; A. Dulles, *Models*, op. cit., 58f; H. de Lubac, *Katholizismus als Gemeinschaft*, Einsiedeln 1943, 68.
40. In addition to the translation mentioned in Note 39 above: *Glauben aus der Liebe*, Einsiedeln 1968.
41. Rechenschaft 6.
42. See J. Fessio, SJ, *The Origin of the Church in Christ's Kenosis: The Ontological Structure of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Regensburg (dissertation) 1974, esp. Chapter Two: "The Church Originating from the Cross". Also M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 239-311, esp. 271-5, 289-91, 301-7. "Das Kreuz wird somit zum konkreten Ursprungsort sowohl der kirchlich-eucharistischen Liebesgemeinschaft als auch alles kirchlich Institutionellen in ihr." (p. 308)
43. SC 146.
44. TD22 391; TD3 341ff.
45. MP 316ff.
46. SV 29. Compare H. de Lubac, "*Mysterium Crucis*" in *Katholizismus*, op. cit., 328-30.
47. MP 220.
48. MP 217.
49. MP 218.
50. H322 209f.
51. SV 29.
52. SV 152; H322 210.
53. MP 218f.
54. H322 162; SV 198.
55. See TD22 314ff. In considering the Church "only insofar as she can and will be a mediation of the revelation (*Offenbarungsgestalt*) of God

Chapter Three/I

in Jesus Christ" (H1 535), Balthasar wishes to avoid four positions which he considers false: (1) the rationalistic rejection of the eternal universal significance of the concrete historical form of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and in the Church, especially as expressed in the attitude of the Enlightenment toward religion; (2) what Balthasar considers the "Protestant" tendency to separate the gestalt of Christ and the gestalt of the Church, whereby the ecclesial forms of mediation as human and therefore hopelessly sinful and imperfect are radically relativized; (3) what might be called the "Catholic" tendency toward naive realism in separating the revelation in Christ and the witness to and mediation of the revelation in the Church, one after the other, in two distinct "phases"; and (4) the simple identification of the divine revelation in Christ and the various forms of ecclesial mediation (for example, the scripture or the structure of the Church). See H1 506-23.

56. PI 325: *"die Gegenwart Gottes in Jesus Christus"*;
SV 150: *"der fortlebende Christus"*.
57. H322 450; SV 154.
58. H1 536.
59. TG 77.
60. SV 151; TD22 390; PI 183. See TD22 316, where Balthasar makes it clear that he knows the limits to the image.
61. PI 351; compare SV 154.
62. SV 333.
63. WS 10.

Chapter Three/I

64. See SV 154.
65. SV 155.
66. SV 152; H322 450. Compare M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 46.
67. SV 152.
68. SV 153f.
69. TG 77.
70. See J. Fessio, op. cit., 158-62.
71. TD22 313.
72. TD22 314.
73. GF 332f.
74. M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 46.
75. See "*Hochzeitlichkeit*", H322 440-54.
76. See TD3 371. Sexual imagery plays an important role in Balthasar's theological symbolism. See M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 246-9. Also J. J. O'Donnell SJ, "Man and Woman as *Imago Dei* in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar" in *Clergy Review* 68/4 (1983), 117-127.
77. See Fessio, op. cit., 261.
78. SV 22.
79. GF 332.
80. See PI 195; H322 447; SV 193.
81. SV 193.
82. SV 194.
83. SV 194.
84. SV 198.
85. SV 202.
86. SV 202; See H1 555, where Balthasar speaks of the Trinity as a bridal mystery.
87. Compare PI 329.
88. NK 53; PI 368. Compare H. Heinz, op. cit., 114.
89. See "*Der Laie und die Kirche*": SV 332-48.
90. GF 94, 97.

Chapter Three/I

91. SV 332.
92. ARA 172.
93. ARA 173.
94. SV 173.
95. H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Das Katholische an der Kirche*" in *Kölner Beiträge* 10, Köln 1972, 10f.
96. SV 168.
97. ARA 172f; SV 168.
98. SV 169.
99. SV 169; compare H. Heinz, op. cit., 278ff.
100. SV 333.
101. ARA 171.
102. See H. Heinz, op. cit., 258.
103. SV 189.
104. SV 170.
105. Compare H. Heinz, op. cit., 284.
106. PI 182; SV 201.
107. See Balthasar's lengthy essay "*Casta Meretrix*": SV 203-305.
108. Compare Y. Congar, *Die Wesenseigenschaften der Kirche* in *Mysterium Salutis IV/1*, Einsiedeln 1972, 368: "Die Kirche läßt sich nur von der Eschatologie her richtig verstehen, d.h. von dem her, was sie sein soll, wenn sie endlich voll und ganz das ist, was sie ist."
109. SV 23f, 189, 335.
110. SC 217.
111. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 246.
112. SV 342.
113. SV 332: "die von Christus selbst begründete, durch nichts zu überholende oder zu relativierende Struktur der Kirche..."
114. SV 342.
115. SV 342.

Chapter Three/I

116. SV 165.
117. See Balthasar's *Geleitwort* to A. Strukelj, *Zivljenje iz polnosti vere*, Ljubljana 1981, 7f and the German summary, *Die Theologie der christlichen Stände bei Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 322-4.
118. See J. O'Donnell's good criticism of this position, *Man and Woman*, op. cit., 126f.
119. SC 217.
120. SV 166; compare SC 217.
121. PI 55.
122. SV 331, 334f; compare PI 56, 232; SV 27.
123. SV 343; GF 143.
124. SV 130.
125. SV 181.
126. SV 181ff.
127. Compare ARA 144-9; GF 96.
128. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, 293; SV 167, 169f.
129. ARA 187.

Chapter Three/IIA

1. See H1 30, 110-20.
2. H1 507.
3. TD21 99ff; KA 66; VC 51 for Balthasar's criticism of Origen. For texts and brief comment see Balthasar's collection, *Origenes. Geist und Feuer*, Salzburg ²1938, esp. 24ff and 109-253 (texts).
4. M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit. 43.
5. TD21 100. See pp. 98-102 on the relationship of scripture to the Incarnation.

Chapter Three/IIA

6. H1 508.
7. See H1 509.
8. H1 510. Note the similarity to Barth here.
Compare KB 94.
9. BG 25.
10. H1 537f.
11. TG 77
12. TD22 399; H1 554.
13. H1 568.
14. TD22 399.
15. H1 540.
16. H1 522.
17. TD22 399.
18. H1 535.
19. TD22 395.
20. NK 58; TD22 395n7, where Balthasar refers to the development of this notion since the work of O. Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament*, Frankfurt 1953. See also p. 3
21. TD22 399. See also p. 395n7 for the background of this term in the *Tübinger Schule*.
22. H322 475.
23. SC 341.
24. Compare TG 142.
25. H1 553f.
26. W. Kasper suggests the term "sacrament of the Spirit", whereby he notes that precisely as sacrament, the Church is not identically the salvation which she mediates. See W. Kasper/G. Sauter, *Kirche*, op. cit., 43f.
27. NK 60f.
28. SV 342; WS 119.
29. K 53.
30. H1 557.

Chapter Three/IIA

31. SC 443.
32. H1 553.
33. Compare H1 537; SV 27, 36f, 331, 335.
34. H1 560.
35. H1 554.
36. TG 72.
37. H1 554.
38. TG 72.
39. See SC 174ff. Note, however, the criticism on p. 192. Compare H1 556.
40. H1 555f, 560f.
41. H1 561; compare 2 Cor 3, 18.
42. H1 557.
43. See H1 554-61; TG 72f.
44. NK 52f.
45. TG 77.
46. PI 229; compare 219f.
47. See SV 199f.
48. Compare K 74.
49. VC 16.
50. VC 15f.
51. H1 551.
52. SC 215f.
53. SC 103f.
54. TG 77.
55. TG 75; compare SC 102.
56. GF 142; compare PI 342.
57. SV 170.
58. BG 99.
59. SC 214f; H1 556f.
60. H1 511, 515, 518f.
61. H1 515; compare VC 11-5, 22, 51-3.
62. H1 515.
63. TG 78.

Chapter Three/IIA

64. H1 517.
65. H1 518.
66. H1 519.
67. H1 519.
68. H1 519.
69. H1 519.
70. VC 21.
71. H1 531f.
72. VC 11f; compare 51-3. See P. Eicher, *Offenbarung*, München 1977, 322.
73. H1 532.
74. See H1 526.
75. H322 140. Compare H1 529 where Balthasar speaks of "the concrete universal (*Universale Concretum*) ...which is Christ himself as universalized in the witness of the scripture through the Holy Spirit".
76. H1 526.
77. VC 22.
78. Compare VC 27.
79. H1 527.
80. Compare H1 518; VC 51, 53.
81. VC 52.
82. H1 519.
83. K 74; KA 66.
84. VC 24f.
85. TD21 99.
86. K 74.
87. Compare BG 185; VC 19.
88. SC 99.
89. VC 18.
90. KA 66 on scripture; H1 522.
91. VC 19.
92. K 77; compare BG 175.

Chapter Three/IIA

93. K 76; compare BG 180-5.
94. K 76.
95. SB 27.
96. K 77.
97. See VC 159-71. Also the small book,
Einfaltungen, München 1969. Compare H1 73f,
577ff; H21 11f, 25f.
98. H21 28.
99. H1 578.
100. K 77.
101. H21 26.
102. H1 533f; SV 342.
103. ARA 176ff, 193ff.
104. NK 56.
105. Balthasar seems positively inclined to the
term *Letztverbindlichkeit* suggested by H. Fries:
ARA 184.
106. See ARA 194.
107. ARA 195.
108. ARA 196f.
109. H1 533.
110. K 78.
111. K 79.
112. VC 220.
113. GF 143f.
114. TG 101.
115. BG 128.
116. See H1 530.
117. GF 140.
118. GF 143.
119. GF 140. Compare VC 130; TD4 382, where Balthasar
speaks of the "*Synergie*" between the Church
and the Spirit. By this he means a mutual
activity, each in the other: without separation
and without confusion, in the Chalcedonian sense.

Chapter Three/IIA

120. SC 151.
121. COR 99.
122. PI 335; compare TG 79ff.
123. SB 22.
124. SB 62.
125. ARA 196.
126. SB 20.
127. TG 79. See also p. 81, where Balthasar points to the Marian dogmas as examples of the freedom of the Spirit in illuminating new aspects of the Christ event. Also GF 149: "Und auch dort, wo für das Glaubensverständnis neue Aspekte vortreten, ist die Kirche sorgsam bedacht, zu erweisen, daß das gnoseologisch Neue ein ontologisch Altes ist, das womöglich in einer gnoseologischen Tradition rückwärts den Ursprüngen zu verfolgt werden kann, oder, wo das ungenügend der Fall wäre, als ein objektiv stets Vorhandenes, wenn auch subjektiv erst jetzt in seiner Tragweite Eingesehenes zu beleuchten ist."
128. GF 146.
129. GF 148; TG 80.
130. SB 323.
131. PI 57, where Balthasar calls the Spirit "*Gottes letzte Freiheit*" and his "*letzte Bestimmtheit*". Compare W. Kasper, *Dogma unter dem Wort Gottes*, Mainz 1965, 88, 95ff, 102f.
132. GF 317.
133. GF 147; WS 31f; SC 140.
134. GF 148; TG 81.
135. TG 80; WS 26; COR 99.
136. SC 139.

Chapter Three/IIA

137. KA 19.
138. SC 242; WS 31; TG 77; GF 317.
139. TG 82f.
140. H1 524.
141. H1 518.
142. VC 19.
143. VC 17.
144. H1 579.
145. Balthasar explicitly mentions Rahner: H1 511.
146. H1 531f.
147. H1 531.
148. H1 523. See SC 99.
149. See GF 153ff.
150. Compare SC 242.
151. See VC 147, 161f.
152. GF 148.

Chapter Three IIB

1. See H2 267-361.
2. H2 278.
3. Compare H2 349.
4. H2 276f.
5. H2 278.
6. Compare H322 271. Note the basic structure of *Herrlichkeit I*: Erblickungslehre--Entrückungslehre.
7. SV 108.
8. H1 188.
9. SC 326.
10. H1 394.
11. PI 226f; SC 120ff.
12. P. Eicher (see *Offenbarung*, op. cit.) calls

Chapter Three IIB

Balthasar's approach a "theological phenomenology" (294f). By this he does not mean that Balthasar adopts the presuppositions and methods of a particular philosophical tradition (Husserl, for example), but that Balthasar's theology is grounded in the believing contemplation of the gestalt of God's self-revelation in the cross and resurrection of Christ. Theology born out of the perception of the gestalt in its total "otherness"--non-deducible from and irreducible to general philosophical, historical, cosmic or anthropological truths--this is the heart of Balthasar's approach (300, 324f).

13. See H1 118; GNL 6.
14. Rechenschaft 27.
15. Rechenschaft 28.
16. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 240; P. Eicher, op. cit., 313f, who points out the fundamental difference between Rahner and Balthasar: Rahner, following Kant, begins from the utter spontaneity and "activity" of spirit whereas Balthasar begins from the conviction that the basic capacity of man as spirit is his receptive ability to perceive that which shows itself. Balthasar's concern is to stress the utter priority of the gestalt which reveals itself. He is suspicious of a transcendental method which could assign to the subjective conditions for the possibility of the perception of revelation a constitutive function in the "evidence" of the revelation-gestalt itself (314).

Chapter Three IIB

17. Rechenschaft 28f.
18. See W 37f; compare M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 241f.
19. H1 193.
20. H1 240; compare 237.
21. VC 58.
22. See M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 240; VC 124.
23. H1 149.
24. H1 153.
25. See H1 168-70; SC 38.
26. H1 18-21.
27. H1 144.
28. H322 25.
29. H1 450f.
30. H1 446.
31. H1 447f.
32. H1 113, 189.
33. H1 174.
34. H1 165.
35. H1 183.
36. H1 172.
37. H1 172f; compare 170.
38. Compare H1 27f.
39. H1 594; compare 160, 208.
40. GNL 54.
41. H1 188f; compare 148.
42. See H1 210-410.
43. J. Mouroux, *L'Expérience chrétienne. Introduction à une théologie*. Paris 1952. See H1 214.
44. H1 216.
45. H1 220.
46. H1 230.
47. This is not to deny the importance that Balthasar attaches to concrete personal religious experience, particularly of the saints, as

Chapter Three/IIB

loci theologici. One thinks immediately of the essential role which Balthasar attributes to the mystical experience of Adrienne von Speyr in his own theological endeavor. Then too, his treatment of Thérèse of Lisieux and Elizabeth of Dijon: *Schwwestern im Geist*, Einsiedeln 1970.

48. H1 219.
49. H1 219-21.
50. H1 219.
51. H1 233.
52. NK 21; compare 26f.
53. H1 242f.
54. SC 238.
55. H322 373-5.
56. SC 240f; PI 144.
57. See KB 39, 151-3.
58. H322 285; compare 283.
59. H322 172.
60. SC 63.
61. H322 285.
62. SV 74: "*Mitvollzug der Existenzform des Messias*"; compare H1 292-4.
63. SV 63.
64. H1 294.
65. SV 61.
66. TD22 116.
67. CS 124.
68. CS 147.
69. CS 170.
70. See KB 339.
71. SC 119; compare MP 278.
72. SC 121; compare BG 117; VC 130.
73. H322 373.

Chapter Three/IIB

74. See H322 373-83; SV 175.
75. H322 381, quoting W. Thüsing, *Per Christum in Deum. Studien zum Verhältnis von Christozentrik und Theozentrik in den paulinischen Hauptbriefen*, Münster 1965, 111.
76. H322 377.
77. SV 174f.
78. H322 377, 381ff.
79. H322 469.
80. K 60.
81. Compare PI 212ff.
82. H322 369f.
83. WS 116f.
84. TD22 467.
85. TD21 368ff; TD22 46f.
86. TD21 280; compare SG 16.
87. See TD22 191; compare M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 21.
88. TD22 467.
89. SC 309.
90. TD22 190.
91. TD22 47.
92. TD21 278; compare GEL 59; TD3 379.
93. M. Kehl, *Kirche*, 250.
94. SV 174; PI 193.
95. PI 193; SV 176.
96. SV 177.
97. SV 176.
98. SV 320.
99. SV 321; compare 324ff, where Balthasar differentiates charis and charism but maintains their inseparable unity.
100. SV 319; H322 291.
101. SV 321.

Chapter Three/IIB

102. SV 140f, 401.
103. SC 16.
104. Compare VC 324f.
105. See H1 393-402, esp. 397ff.
106. H1 399; see ST 290f.
107. See PI 154f; H322 424.
108. Compare M. Kehl, *Kirche*, op. cit., 294.
109. ST 262; TG 61f.
110. VC 168.
111. GF 150.
112. TG 82.
113. VC 168.
114. TG 76.
115. SV 327.
116. PI 150.
117. PI 151.
118. GEL 95f.
119. GEL 96. Compare SB 91-4.
120. PI 155; see also ARA 259ff.
121. H. U. v. Balthasar (trans.), Ignatius of Loyola, *Die Exerzitien*, Einsiedeln ⁶1979.
122. See "*Die Kirche lieben*", PI 162-200.
123. ARA 260.
124. H1 246.
125. SG 21.
126. SV 185.
127. SC 87.
128. SC 257f.
129. VC 161.
130. SG 21.
131. SG 223.
132. VC 214f.
133. Rechenschaft 35; EB 10f; H. Heinz, op. cit., 61ff, 84-8. The last volume of *Theodramatik* (IV: *Endspiel*) is an extraordinary example of this

relationship.

134. TG 82f; KJ 93. Compare W. Tinnefeldt, *Ekstasis der Liebe und Einfaltung des Glaubens. Eine Untersuchung zur Frage nach der Mitte und Einheit der christlichen Wahrheit bei Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Mainz (dissertation) 1975, 57.
135. VC 220.
136. *In Gottes Einsatz Leben*, Einsiedeln 1971.
137. GEL 14.
138. GEL 40.
139. GEL 45.
140. TD22 116.

Chapter Three/III

1. For the following, see especially: "*Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Katholizität der Kirche*" in *Absolutheit des Christentums*, QD79, W. Kasper (ed.), Freiburg 1977; "*Kirche aus Juden und Heiden*" in TD22 331-410; "*Anspruch auf Katholizität*" in PI 61-116; "*Vorchristliche Religionen*" in TD3 203-9; COR 85ff, 98-101, 103.
2. VC 282.
3. QD79 134.
4. PI 62.
5. TD22 412; compare SC 152, 341.
6. PI 62. See WS 83f.
7. QD79 148f.
8. QD79 152.
9. TD22 400; compare SC 154. Also W. Kasper, *Kirche*, op. cit., 44f.
10. Compare SC 241.

Chapter Three/III

11. TD22 388, quoting H. de Lubac, *Le fondement théologique des missions*, Paris 1946, 30f.
12. TD22 400.
13. Balthasar apparently follows E. Przywara, who sees a congenital, irremedial "deficiency" in the catholicity of the Church in the rejection of Christ by the Jews. Przywara would understand this "rupture", this "failure of the Church", as her participation in the "failure" of the earthly task of Jesus. This is in no way comparable to the ruptures which the Church experienced later, which were the result of her sinfulness and for which the Church must bear the blame. See QD79 146f.
14. QD79 148; TD22 406ff; ARA 107.
15. QD79 147.
16. See TD22 408f; "*Kirche als Heilswirklichkeit*" in *Glaubt ihr nicht, so bleibt ihr nicht*, W. Seidel (ed.), Würzburg 1983, 140f.
17. "*Kirche als Heilswirklichkeit*", op. cit., 141.
18. QD79 152.
19. "*Kirche als Heilswirklichkeit*", op. cit., 141.
20. QD79 148.
21. Compare QD79 152.
22. TD22 386.
23. TD22 385.
24. PI 87f, 103.
25. QD79 153; M. Kehl, *Lesebuch*, op. cit., 18f; PI 105.
26. TD22 387.
27. QD79 152.
28. On the other hand, compare SB 38-40.
29. QD79 153.
30. TD22 384, 388. Compare Balthasar's lecture at the Catholic University of America in

Chapter Three/III

- September 1977: "Catholicism and the Religions" published in *Communio* 5/1 (1978), 6-14.
 Critical responses: John B. Cobb, Jr., "A Question for Hans Urs von Balthasar" (53-59) and Daniel J. O'Hanlon, "Hans Urs von Balthasar on non-Christian Religions and Meditation" (60-8). See Balthasar's "Response to my Critics" (69-76).
31. *"Geist und Feuer"*, 73. Compare *Communio*, op. cit., 76: "Perhaps it would be worthwhile to think about this subject ((i.e., the trinitarian dimensions of prayer)) more than about the problems of christianity among the world religions."
 32. *Communio*, op. cit., 73f.
 33. *Communio*, op. cit., 70.
 34. SC 340.
 35. TD22 405.
 36. TD22 383f; compare 379.
 37. COR 128f; TD22 377-80, 382n17; TD3 204, 209.
 38. SB 40.
 39. SB 43f, 54.
 40. For example, Cordula, QD79: *"Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Katholizität der Kirche"*, *Theodramatik IV*, and his talk at the Catholic University of America cited in Note 30 above.
 41. SB 43.
 42. TD22 400-6.
 43. TD22 390f.
 44. MP 317; compare TD4 156, 159f.
 45. QD79 135; compare 156.
 46. Compare SC 154.
 47. H322 371; SC 155; VC 155.

Chapter Three/III

48. TD3 11; TD4 171f, 243-64.
49. Compare TD3 399-468 esp. 420f; TD4 180, 182ff.
50. TD4 288f.
51. See TD4 172f, 264, 273-77, 288-93.
52. TD4 291f.
53. See WS 162.
54. Compare SC 343.
55. TG 48.
56. QD79 135.

Chapter Four

1. CS 7.
2. NK 134.
3. Compare H1 529.
4. Compare NK 58; BG 185.
5. See WS 10, 60.
6. BG 185.
7. Compare WS 82.
8. H1 406.
9. Compare NK 134; VC 226; PI 234.
10. H1 407.
11. TD4 120.
12. TD21 284-8.
13. PI 327.
14. TD3 340.
15. TD21 264.
16. See TD21 381.
17. See TD3 342-57.
18. PI 235.
19. PI 334.
20. SC 142.
21. See H1 577.
22. See BG 186-94.
23. Compare PI 231.
24. NK 134; BG 20.
25. CS 170.
26. CS 177, 180.
27. CS 170. See also CHRIST 89: "Mündig ist demnach, wer die objective sakramentale Wirklichkeit in sich subjektiv-existentiell realisiert."
28. CS 177.
29. BG 25.
30. BG 23.
31. EB 75.

Chapter Four

32. BG 25.
33. BG 23.
34. Compare PI 232.
35. BG 16f, 22; compare VC 15ff.
36. BG 22.
37. BG 23.
38. Compare VC 161.
39. BG 25.
40. See M. Albus, "*Geist und Feuer*", op. cit., 133ff.
Also VC 11-27, esp. 25; VC 48-72, esp. 50-3.
41. BG 25.
42. See VC 24f; H1 404.
43. VC 26; H1 523.
44. VC 53; ST 280.
45. VC 25.
46. VC 58.
47. VC 167.
48. NK 56.
49. VC 15.
50. VC 17; H1 524.
51. GEL 39.
52. SC 261; compare TD22 228f.
53. NK 135; PI 148.
54. PI 149.
55. NK 135; PI 150
56. Compare H1 575; NK 136.
57. NK 136, 138.
58. NK 135f; BG 75f.
59. PI 232.
60. See especially PI 133-61.
61. Compare SG 17.
62. NK 143.
63. NK 133.
64. NK 134: "Das führt uns zum zweiten Teil hinüber:

Chapter Four

zur Spannung des innerkirchlichen Gehorsams zwischen Unmittelbarkeit des Gehorsams an Gott, Unmittelbarkeit des Gehorsams zum Nächsten und Vermittlung der kirchlichen Autorität."

Compare NK 142.

65. NK 138; compare CS 209f.
66. Einfaltungen 142; PI 140.
67. NK 138; compare CS 175.
68. Compare QD79 150f.
69. See PI 155-61; NK 140-4.
70. PI 154f.
71. TG 78. See SV 26.
72. PI 155; NK 137.
73. PI 133.
74. PI 155.
75. K 90.
76. SC 256.
77. See ARA 287-94; SV 116f.
78. VC 217; ARA 290f; K 183-90.
79. WS 33.
80. H322 265f, 393, 399, 404, 406.
81. H322, 373.
82. H322 237.
83. TD22 393; NK 135.
84. CS 180.
85. See ST 290f; compare EB 50f; TD22 324.
86. NK 59.
87. H322 411; K 150.
88. See SG 144-61, 258f.
89. GEL 40.
90. WS 84.
91. VC 226.

Chapter Five

1. H1 208.
2. H1 209.
3. H1 209.
4. Compare BG 236f; H1 247-90.
5. H1 291; compare H322 405f.
6. Compare GF 257f.
7. NK 94.
8. Alle Wege, 339.
9. Compare TG 102.
10. PI 230.
11. PI 333.
12. Compare NK 132 where Balthasar speaks of
die christologische Existenzform aller Getauften.
13. Compare TD22 115f.
14. SV 74.
15. CS 176f; MP 221.
16. BG 50.
17. SV 174.
18. SC 331.
19. Compare GNL 90; SV 105.
20. NK 94.
21. TD3 358; H322 295; Crucifixus, 26.
22. H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Alle Wege führen zum Kreuz*"
in *IKZ 4/80*, 333-42.
23. Alle Wege, 338.
24. H322 377; TD22 227.
25. TD3 360.
26. Alle Wege, 336.
27. Compare H322 283f.
28. Alle Wege, 335.
29. PI 314.
30. TD3 357-60; SV 116.
31. Compare TD3 376.
32. SV 199; H1 540; TD3 369; ARA 172; EB 45; SC 337.

Chapter Five

33. TD3 369; MP 220.
34. Compare H322 289; ARA 172.
35. SC 260.
36. H1 541f; compare TD3 378.
37. MP 220; compare TD3 361f.
38. H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Stellvertretung: Schlüsselwort christlichen Lebens*" in *Christliche Innerlichkeit* 13/5 (1980), 229-35.
39. See MP 220; TD22 225; TD3 362, where Balthasar speaks of the *Leidens- und Auferstehungsgemeinschaft* in grace. Compare TD4 458.
40. See TD3 361f.
41. See TD3 363-79; SC 116-217.
42. SC 209ff. Compare *Mark* 10, 38.
43. TD3 378.
44. TD22 227; WS 55.
45. TD22 226.
46. TD3 379-95, esp. 390, 394; TD4 442-6; WS 55; *Stellvertretung* 233.
47. *Stellvertretung* 230.
48. TD22 227.
49. TD22 227f.
50. TD3 379.
51. TD3 380; TD22 229.
52. Compare H322 364.
53. TD3 385.
54. TD3 391.
55. TD22 221f.
56. SG 456f.
57. See SG 458; compare 450f. Two texts are fundamental here: *Eph* 1, 4-6 and *Rom* 8, 29. See also SG 366.
58. BG 66f.
59. BG 69.

Chapter Five

60. Commenting on Elisabeth of Dijon: SG 456f.
61. Compare SC 154; H322 364f.
62. CS 56.
63. Compare CS 57.
64. SC 154.
65. H322 363.
66. H322 402.
67. See SC 154.
68. H322 393.
69. H322 401f.
70. TD3 391.
71. TD3 394.
72. See the important essay "*Die Messe, ein Opfer der Kirche?*" in SC 166-217.
73. NK 153.
74. See also 2 *Cor* 4, 12: "So death is at work in us, but life in you." Also 2 *Cor* 5, 14ff; 1 *Cor* 4, 9ff; *Gal* 2, 9; *Gal* 6, 17.
75. TD3 386.
76. SC 408.
77. TD4 458.
78. Crucifixus 30.
79. Stellvertretung 235.
80. Crucifixus 29; compare H322 433-8, 484.
81. Compare TD4 428f.
82. Compare TD4 157.

Chapter Six

1. See H322 373-83.
2. SC 95-105.
3. Crucifixus 29: *Für-uns-sein Gottes*.
4. Compare Eph 1, 3-10.
5. See H. Heinz, *Der Gott des Je-mehr. Der christologische Ansatz Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Bern/Frankfurt 1975, 269. See above, this study, Chapter One, note 45.
6. TD4 68.
7. SC 132: "das ihrer Liebe Zukommende, Zufallende, das Je-Mehr dessen, was im reinen Ineinandersein erhoffbar schien, das Je-Neuer, Je-Jünger, Je-Fruchtbarer Gottes."
8. TD4 59.
9. TD4 67: "Das ewige Leben das Gott ist...kann keinesfalls als ein Werden bezeichnet werden."
10. TD4 467ff.
11. TD4 67.
12. TD4 79; compare 72.
13. TD4 467.
14. TD4 471.
15. Compare TD21 269.
16. H. Heinz, op. cit., 99.
17. TD4 70; compare 59. See also his earlier essay, *"Improvisation über Geist und Zukunft"*: SC 123-55.
18. SG 46.
19. CS 317 (*italics mine*).
20. CS 327.
21. SG 46
22. CS 379.
23. Note the similarity to Barth: KB 248.
24. BG 10f.
25. BG 172.

Chapter Six

26. SC 309.
27. NK 71; compare PI 334.
28. PI 291.
29. PI 330.
30. H1 542; compare PI 293f.
31. GF 258.
32. SC 161-3; COR 101.
33. SC 308f.
34. BG 16f.
35. K 30 compare VC 257.
36. PI 295; K 131.
37. K 22.
38. K 25, 106-10, esp. 108; PI 296; VC 245-59,
esp. 252, 256.
39. SG 309.
40. TD21 272.
41. H2 257f.
42. TD21 269.
43. TD21 269.
44. TD21 270.
45. TD21 271.
46. TD21 272.
47. TD21 273.
48. TD21 274; see TD4 83-6!
49. TD21 275.
50. H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Christian Prayer*" in
Communio. International Catholic Review
5/1 (1978), 21.
51. BG 186-94; compare 65.
52. M. Albus, "*Geist und Feuer. Ein Gespräch mit
Hans Urs von Balthasar*" in *HK 30* (1976), 79;
Alle Wege 340; H. U. v. Balthasar, "*Catholicism
and the Religions*" in *Communio. International
Catholic Review* 5/1 (1978), 6-14, esp. 10f; NK 82-97

Chapter Six

53. PI 78, 427f.
54. NK 96; K 110; SV 12.
55. PI 305f.
56. Compare PI 336f; Alle Wege 339f.
57. See PI 309, 314; NK 16.
58. M. Albus, *"Geist und Feuer"*, op. cit., 79.
59. Compare H. Heinz, op. cit., 241, quoting Balthasar: "die trinitarische Liebe ist die einzige Letztform aller zwischen-Gott-menschlichen und aller mitmenschlichen Liebe": H322 454.
60. TD4 66.
61. TD4 72.
62. See TD4 439.
63. TD4 74.
64. TD4 74.
65. Compare W. Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, Mainz 1982, 377.
66. TD4 74.
67. Compare Kasper, *Der Gott Jesu Christi*, op. cit., 374.
68. Alle Wege 337.
69. K 155.
70. TD4 92.
71. K 19-21.
72. SG 452; GEL 37f.
73. See PI 426.
74. TD4 366f.
75. TD21 368; PI 33, 425.
76. VC 190.
77. TD21 231-5; GF 91.
78. TD4 94f.
79. TD4 95.
80. Compare TD4 365.
81. TD4 95.

Chapter Six

82. Compare GEL 37f.
83. PI 35.
84. TD4 349.
85. TD4 475.
86. TD4 343; see TD21 155-69; TD22 39-50.
87. See GEL 9, 41.
88. TD4 347.
89. GEL 87.
90. GEL 87.
91. TD4 348.
92. See TD4 344, 379.
93. TD4 379.
94. TD4 383.
95. TD4 344.
96. GEL 89.
97. TD3 448.
98. TD3 453.
99. GEL 93.
100. See TD3 434; TD4 157-60, esp. note 16.
101. Compare *Jo 15, 12ff.* See the beautiful formulation of this thought in J. Moltmann's essay on the Christ-Mysticism of St. Theresa of Avila: "*Die Wendung zur Christusmystik bei Teresa von Avila oder Teresa von Avila und Martin Luther*" in W. Herbststrith (ed.), *Gott Allein*, Freiburg 1982, 184-206. On page 206: "Gottesfreundschaft im Gebet auszuüben, ist eine verantwortliche Gabe, weil sie den Menschen in die Weltverantwortung Gottes hineinnimmt."
102. See TD 3 453.
103. See TD4 158-60, esp. note 16. Also the section "*Die Gestalt der christlichen Hoffnung*", 122-67, TD3 449-54; *Kleine Fibel* 94-7.

Chapter Six

104. TD3 449.
105. Kleine Fibel 95.
106. TD4 158.
107. Kleine Fibel 97.
108. See NK 167f.
109. TD4 160n16.
110. SC 153f.
111. TD4 128f.
112. TD4 160n16.
113. It is impossible within the scope of this study to enter into a detailed discussion of Balthasar's eschatology. See the recent dissertation of K. Tossou, *Streben nach Vollendung. Eine Studie zu Pneumatologie im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg 1983. The main focus of this study is the Holy Spirit as the eschatological power of God which leads man, and through him, the world and its history, to fulfillment. On Balthasar's theology of history: A. Peelman, *Hans Urs von Balthasar et la théologie de l'histoire*, Bern/Frankfurt 1978.
114. TD4 158f.
115. GEL 96f.
116. SC 344.
117. Compare K. Hemmerle, *Thesen zu einer trinitarischen Ontologie*, Einsiedeln 1976, 70ff.

Critical Reflections

1. Compare VC 216.
2. See above, pp. 30ff.
3. Einfaltungen 42.
4. Compare 1 Jo 4, 1ff.
5. Balthasar's ecclesiology is extremely differentiated and Balthasar does stress the analogical difference between Christ and the Church so as to prevent a simple identification of the two. Nonetheless, one is left with a general impression which leads one to ask whether his Ecclesiology is truly free of "every form of ecclesial Christicism and Monophysitism" as W. Link claims! See W. Link, *Gestalt und Gestaltlosigkeit der Kirche. Umriss einer personal-geistlichen Kirchenlehre bei Hans Urs von Balthasar*, (Dissertation at the Gregorian, Rome 1970), 516.
7. PI 154.
8. Here I agree with the critical questions of M. Kehl, *Kirche als Institution. Zur theologischen Begründung des institutionellen Charakters der Kirche in der neueren deutschsprachigen Ekklesiologie*, Frankfurt 1976, 308-11 and K. Tossou, *Streben nach Vollendung. Zur Pneumatologie im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg 1983, 533.
9. The papers presented at the Hans Urs von Balthasar Symposium have been published in *Communio--International Catholic Review* 5/1 (1978).
10. Compare M. Albus, "Geist und Feuer. Ein Gespräch mit Hans Urs von Balthasar" in HK 30 (1976), 79.
11. See Rechenschaft 14; M. Albus, "Geist und Feuer", op. cit., 73, 79.
12. Compare W. Kasper/J. Moltmann, *Jesus Ja--Kirche Nein?*, Zürich 1973.

Critical Reflections

13. TD3 393.
14. Compare TD4 83-6 and "Christian Prayer" in *Communio*, op. cit., 15-21.
15. See J. J. O'Donnell SJ, *Trinity and Temporality. The Christian Doctrine of God in the Light of Process Theology and the Theology of Hope*, Oxford 1983 and G. Greshake/G. Lohfink (eds.), *Bittgebet--Testfall des Glaubens*, Mainz 1978.
16. For example, F. Wulf's review of *In Gottes Einsatz Leben*, in *Geist und Leben* 45 (1972), 394.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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The following is a list solely of those works cited in this dissertation. For a complete bibliography of the works of Hans Urs von Balthasar until 1980 see *Hans Urs von Balthasar. Bibliographie 1925-1980*. Cornelia Capol has edited and expanded the bibliography put together by Berthe Widmer from 1925-1965.

For a fairly complete list of the secondary literature see, above all, K. Tossou, *Streben nach Vollendung*, Freiburg 1983, 542-552 and M. Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis. Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars*, Freiburg 1981, 329-342.

Works of Hans Urs von Balthasar cited in this dissertation are listed chronologically, according to the order of C. Capol's *Bibliographie 1925-1980*. When appropriate, changes and newer editions are noted.

ABBREVIATIONS OF FREQUENTLY CITED WORKS

Alle Wege	"Alle Wege führen zum Kreuz"
ARA	<i>Der antirömische Affekt</i>
BG	<i>Das betrachtende Gebet</i>
CA	<i>Der Christ und die Angst</i>
CHRIST	<i>Wer ist ein Christ?</i>
COR	<i>Cordula oder der Ernstfall</i>
Crucifixus	"Crucifixus etiam pro nobis"
CS	<i>Christlicher Stand</i>
DK	<i>Der dreifache Kranz</i>

EB	<i>Erster Blick auf Adrienne von Speyr</i>
Einfaltungen	<i>Einfaltungen. Auf Wegen christlicher Einigung</i>
GEL	<i>In Gottes Einsatz Leben</i>
GF	<i>Das Ganze im Fragment</i>
GNL	<i>Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe</i>
GR	<i>Zuerst Gottes Reich</i>
H1	<i>Herrlichkeit (Bd. I)</i>
H2	<i>Herrlichkeit (Bd. II)</i>
H312	<i>Herrlichkeit (Bd. III,1; Teil 2)</i>
H322	<i>Herrlichkeit (Bd. III,2; Teil 2)</i>
K	<i>Klarstellungen. Zur Prüfung der Geister</i>
KA	<i>Katholisch</i>
KB	<i>Karl Barth. Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie</i>
KJ	<i>Kennt uns Jesus--Kennen wir ihn?</i>
Kleine Fibel	<i>Kleine Fibel für verunsicherte Laien</i>
MP	<i>Mysterium Paschale</i>
NK	<i>Neue Klarstellungen</i>
PI	<i>Pneuma und Institution</i>
QD79	<i>"Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Katholizität der Kirche"</i>
Rechenschaft	<i>Rechenschaft</i>
SC	<i>Spiritus Creator</i>
SG	<i>Schwestern im Geist</i>
ST	<i>Thomas von Aquin. Besondere Gnaden- gaben und die zwei Wege menschlichen Lebens</i>
Stellvertretung	<i>"Stellvertretung: Schlüsselwort christlichen Lebens"</i>
SV	<i>Sponsa Verbi</i>
TD1	<i>Theodramatik (Bd. I)</i>
TD21	<i>Theodramatik (Bd. II,1)</i>
TD22	<i>Theodramatik (Bd. II,2)</i>
TD3	<i>Theodramatik (Bd. III)</i>
TD4	<i>Theodramatik (Bd. IV)</i>

TG	<i>Theologie der Geschichte</i>
VC	<i>Verbum Caro</i>
W	<i>Wahrheit. Bd. I: Wahrheit der Welt</i>
WS	<i>Die Wahrheit ist symphonisch. Aspekte christlichen Pluralismus</i>

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L E B E N S L A U F

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VERZEICHNIS

1-10	Verzeichnis der Verträge, die zwischen dem Reich und den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen geschlossen wurden.
11-20	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen ausgestellt wurden.
21-30	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen empfangen wurden.
31-40	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen bestätigt wurden.
41-50	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen widerlegt wurden.
51-60	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen aufgehoben wurden.
61-70	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen widerrufen wurden.
71-80	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen annulliert wurden.
81-90	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen ratifiziert wurden.
91-100	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen approbirt wurden.
101-110	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen confirmirt wurden.
111-120	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen ratificirt wurden.
121-130	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen approbirt wurden.
131-140	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen confirmirt wurden.
141-150	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen ratificirt wurden.
151-160	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen approbirt wurden.
161-170	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen confirmirt wurden.
171-180	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen ratificirt wurden.
181-190	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen approbirt wurden.
191-200	Verzeichnis der Urkunden, die von den Fürstbischöfen von Tübingen confirmirt wurden.

